ISLAM OUR GUIDE

KAUSAR NIAZI

PREFACE

I cannot give an independent title to this book of mine. It is a continuation of my previous books, *Towards Understanding the Qur'ān*, *Fundamental Truths* and *Islam our Religion*. The ideas and impressions which could not form part of the earlier books have been included in this book.

I am an ordinary student of Islam. I am not proud of my knowledge, the vastness of my studies or the depth of my learning. But it is a fact that I have tried to understand Islam and I have imbibed a faith in it after full understanding and, in the words of the Qur'ān, I have believed in it after believing in it and perfected my faith in it.

Believe me, so far as I have studied Islam and went deep into its mysteries I have certainly found it like a vast expanse of ocean, but I have not found it a stranger to the nature and temperament of man. It is fully seized of man's conscience and every aspect of his humanity. It does not cut into pieces the whole of which man is made, like Buddhism, Christianity and Judaism or other "isms". It sees man from the background of his whole environment.

Like God, Who is the Knower of the Unseen and

of all defects wherever existent, Islam knows of all the defects, shortcomings, secrets and ailments of man, and, like an expert physician, it has prescribed suitable treatment for all the weaknesses and diseases of man.

I am saying this in an atmosphere heavy with atomic explosions, flights to the moon and other planets and I am saying this with full confidence and perfect faith after realising full well that the human mind has made such a stupendous progress that it can travel vast expanses of space extending to the moon and the stars and it has acquired the power to probe into the depths of space, heavens, moons, suns and stars.

But it has failed to reach the depths of the human conscience. It has not plumbed the depths of human nature. It has carved out men from steel and stone, but it has not been able to hear the beatings of the human heart. It has invented mechanical instruments whereby it can control the sounds coming from millions of miles, but it has failed to perceive the restlessness of man's soul, although fourteen hundred years ago, a servant had plumbed the depths of the human soul and put his finger on the restlessness of man and the lack of peace in his heart and prescribed a treatment for them in the form of Islam.

As I have said earlier, this is not an independent book of mine and it does not go into the details

of that prescription which Muḥammad (upon whom be peace) had presented before the world in the form of Islam. Even so it contains a few hints. If God helps me, I will continue this work.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Maulana Mazheruddin Siddiqi, who, in spite of his research work and other activities as a scholar in the Islamic Research Institute, found time to translate this book from Urdu.

I am also grateful to Sh. Muhammad Ashraf for having produced this book in a befitting manner and in keeping with his tradition as a publisher of Islamic literature.

KAUSAR NIAZI

TABLE OF TRANSLITERATION

In order to reproduce faithfully and accurately the exact pronunciation of Arabic terms in English letters, the following transliteration scheme has been followed in this book:

Consonants

ء	'	ز	z	ق	q
ب	b	س	s	ک	k
ت	t	ش	sh	ل	l
ث	th	ص	ṣ	م	m
ج	j	ض	ḍ	ن	n
ح	ḥ	ط	ṭ	ه	h
خ	kh	ظ	ẓ	و	w
د	d	ع	'	ی	y
ذ	dh	غ	gh		
ر	r	ف	f		

Vowels

Short ـَ a; = ـِ i; = ـُ u

Long ـَا ā; = ـِی ī; = ـُو ū

Dipthongs: ـَی = ay; ـَو = aw

Double: ـِیّ = iyya; ـُوّ = uwwa

Tā' marbūṭah: ة = *ah*; in construct : ـَة , *at*

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1

ISLAM IS THE GREATEST STANDARD-BEARER OF HUMAN UNITY

It is an irrefutable fact that Islam is the first religion of the world which laid the foundation of human unity, which brought men nearer to one another in a real sense and which declared itself against differences in human beings due to colour and race.

Islam is the religion which called man to unity and declared that all human beings are one and belong to the same race. So long as Islam did not appear on the stage of the world, mankind was deeply divided by racial and class differences.

When Islam came, it cried out from the housetops: "All of you are descended from Adam, and Adam was made of clay. No Arab is superior to a non-Arab, no man of fair colour has superiority over a man of black colour, nor does a man of black colour enjoy any superiority over a man of fair colour."

Islamic history is a witness to the fact that when Bilāl, the Abyssinian, accepted Islam, his place in Islamic society was equal to that of Abū Bakr, 'Umar Fārūq and 'Alī. He was as much respected in the Islamic society as the noblest scion of the Quraish. No one dreamt of holding him in contempt because of his black colour.

Islam removed the contempt which attached to men of black colour and gave the same status to all men whether of black or of fair colour, whether they were slaves or free men. The brotherhood established by Islam had no room for classes. There was no difference in this society between great men and small men, between the high and the low.

Islam united man to man in such a way that the people of the Far East started loving the people of the Far West. There is no doubt that it is an irrefutable fact that Islam is not only the greatest culture but also the only culture which achieved wonders in joining and uniting,men to each other, because, while other religions succeeded only in uniting the disparate elements of the same nation, Islam became successful in uniting the separate elements of different nations and in uniting humanity as a whole. What powerful force Islam proved to be in reclaiming human culture has been attested by a modern author who says: "In the fifth and sixth centuries, mankind stood on the brink of destruction. All those

revolutionary movements had become extinct which had laid the foundation of human civilisation and no suitable and appropriate substitute could be found to replace them. It seemed as if the structure of human civilisation, which was built in the long period of four thousand years, was about to collapse and mankind was about to revert to that state of barbarism in which every nation and every sect was hostile to each other and lawlessness and chaos was the order of the day. Ancient codes and regulations had lost their force and the new discipline brought by Christianity, instead of forging human unity, was creating mutual conflicts. The colossal tree of civilisation whose branches covered the entire world had been sapped and undermined and every moment there was a fear that it would totter to its fall. In these conditions there was no revolutionary movement which could revive human unity and save the structure of civilisation from its impending collapse. Then, suddenly, Islam appeared and proclaimed its message of the greatness and loftiness of entire mankind."

2

CONCEPT OF POWER IN ISLAM

When people try to acquire power, they have in mind the idea of receiving generous remuneration from the Government and of being able to manipulate the public treasury according to their interests. The First Caliph of Islam, Abū Bakr, was a ruler who, when he came to power, earned his own living by trade for a considerable time and did not receive any payment from the public treasury. It was after he became Caliph that one day he was found going to the market with a few pieces of cloth. In the way he was met by 'Umar and Abū 'Ubaidah who asked him: "Caliph of Muslims, where are you going?" He replied: "To earn my living." They said: "You are the Caliph of Muslims. You need not undertake this labour." They insisted that he should agree to receive remuneration from the public treasury. They thought that the time spent by the Caliph on earning his living should be spent in the service of the Muslims. Abū Bakr agreed to receive remuneration from the public

treasury. But an idea of how small this remuneration was can be formed by the fact that once his wife wished to prepare a sweet dish. But his income did not permit this luxury. At last his wife began to save something every day from his small income and after some time she was able to prepare the sweet dish. When the dish was brought before Abū Bakr, instead of eating it with pleasure, he said to his wife: "It seems that we can do without the amount of money you have been able to save. Therefore, in future we should receive less remuneration from the public treasury."

As if this was not sufficient, till his last day he was thinking of returning to the public treasury all the amount he had received in performing the duties of the Caliph. On his death-bed he asked: "How much money have I so far received from the public treasury?" When he was told of the exact amount he had received, he said: "Sell some of my property and return the amount to the treasury." He left a will with his daughter, 'Ā'ishah, that all the things belonging to the Muslims like utensils, crockery, camels, slaves and cushions which he used in his lifetime should be returned to them. This selflessness caused 'Umar to remark: "Abū Bakr, you have created great difficulties for those who will come after you."

The second condition necessary for a Welfare

State is that its ruler should fulfil the requirements of justice and in deciding matters he should show neither fear nor favour. The weaker classes in society can feel safe only when they know full well that the ruler will not show any consideration to the powerful sections of society in dealing justice to them. When Abū Bakr became Caliph, he first assured the people that he will not tolerate any obstacle in the way of justice. In his first address, he said:

"O people! I have been made your chief, although I am not the best among you. If I do good, you help me, and if I commit evil, you straighten me. Truth is a trust and falsehood is the misuse of trust. The weak among you is powerful in my sight until I remove his complaint, and the powerful among you is weak in my sight until I do justice."

This was, in a sense, the manifesto of Abū Bakr which he presented to his people and which he implemented to the full during his Caliphate.

3

FORCE OF PUBLIC OPINION

In connection with respect for law, one of the procedures adopted by Islam is that side by side with arousing the inner consciousness of man, it also created a healthy public opinion which rouses itself against the breakers of law and, by instituting their social bycott, forces them to respect law.

During the time of the Prophet a Companion of the Prophet had a neighbour who did not respect law and was guilty of immoral conduct. This caused great embarrassment to the Companion who brought his complaint before the Holy Prophet. The Prophet asked him to take out all his furniture and utensils, etc., and put them on the street. The Companion accordingly began to take out his furniture and utensils and put them on the street. When people saw this, they gathered round him and asked him what the matter was. The Companion complained against the conduct of his neighbour, whereupon public opinion of the Islamic society asserted itself.

All the people turned against the disorderly neighbour and began to revile him. When he came to know that his conduct had aroused bitter criticism of the people of Medina, he came to the Companion and asked forgiveness of him assuring him that in future he will have no cause for complaint. When the Companion remained unmoved, the guilty man himself began to take his furniture and utensils inside the house. The Companion at last assented and went inside his house. After this incident the Companion had never had a complaint against his neighbour.

Today, the difficulty is that people break the law openly, and society does no reprimand them. When the law asserts itself, people refuse to bear testimony. The result is that incidents of the breach of the law keep increasing and there is no way of stopping them.

It is Islam which, on the one hand, fills the people with the fear of the judgment in the Hereafter and thus creates in them a sense of responsibility and, on the other hand, creates such a moral consciousness in society that those who do not respect law become fully isolated in society and are forced to change their behaviour.

Here a question arises. If the Qur'ānic teachings furnish a code of conduct which, when practised, leads to the respect for law and human society becomes a haven of peace, why is it that in our society

respect for law is non-existent, in spite of the fact that we claim to believe in the teachings of the Qur'ān?

4

HOW CAN PEACE BE ESTABLISHED?

Once 'Umar, the Second Caliph of Islam, was taking some provisions for a poor woman. His slave said: "O Caliph! why are you undertaking this burden when I am present to serve you?" 'Umar replied: "You will bear this burden for me today, but who will bear my burden on the Judgment Day?" Ḍirār Asadī says: "I remained with 'Alī in many battles. I saw that when the night was nearing its end, 'Alī would rise and, taking hold of his beard, he would give expression to his uneasiness, as if he has been bitten by a snake. He would weep and say: 'O world, do not deceive me. Deceive others. Why do you pursue me? I have divorced you three times, and I cannot retrace my steps. Your life is small and it is a small thing to pursue thee. The provision is small and a long journey lies ahead.'"

Among the followers of the Companions of the Holy Prophet, Abū Ḥanīfah occupies a distinguished place. Millions of Muslims even today follow him

in juristic decisions. His condition is described by Yazīd b. Kait who says: One day I joined him in the night prayer. The Imām recited the Sūrah entitled "When the earth quakes". People left the mosque after offering prayer. I saw him sighing. I left him thinking that my presence would disturb him in his worship. When I came back to the mosque early in the morning, I found him sitting in the same condition with sadness written in his face. He was holding his beard and weeping and saying: "O God, Who will requite all good and evil, even though it be ever so small, save Thy servant Nu'mān (Abū Ḥanīfah) from Hell-Fire."

These were the people whose lives illumined the darkness of the world, but how sensitive they were to their accountability in the Hereafter? If you ponder over the matter, you will come to the conclusion that this fear of the Hereafter was mainly responsible for their moral greatness. Wherever they lived and in whatever capacity they lived, they felt that they were accountable for every word and deed of theirs. This is the reason why the sense of responsibility displayed by them in the affairs of life is unexampled. When they occupied the seat of power, they worked untiringly in performing their duties. When not in power, they set up an example of sympathy towards the under-dogs. The peace enjoyed by humanity during their period of life was so

great that, in these days of progress, not even one-tenth of that peace is available to men.

You must have thought over the fact as to why peace has departed from the world today. Mankind is yearning for contented life. Why, in spite of so many inventions and spread of knowledge, man is becoming a wolf who prays on his fellow-men? Perhaps you may agree with me that the root cause of this phenomenon is that people have forgotten the Day of Judgment and its terrors have been effaced from their minds.

When the First World War came, its ravages opened the eyes of the nations. In 1920 the League of Nations was established. It was made responsible for world peace. An annual expenditure of £ 10 lacs was incurred on the League. But the result was disappointing. The members of the League of Nations indulged in another war more ferocious than the First World War and the League of Nations died its own death.

After the Second World War, the nations of the world have come together in the United Nations, but world peace is still far off. The big nations who are the founders of the United Nations are busy in preying upon weaker nations. Declarations of peace are followed by attempts to destroy the smaller nations.

Only if somebody could explain to humanity that the wounds inflicted on it cannot be healed

either by the League of Nations or the United Nations. The only cure for its troubles is that, in accordance with the teachings of the Qur'ān, a just and equitable system of life is founded on the basis of the unity of mankind and by means of deep faith the fear of the Hereafter is inculcated in the minds of men. If this comes to pass, the world will become a haven of peace.

In addition to respect for human life, in these days stress is laid on mutual co-existence for world peace. But is it not a historical fact that Islam is the first religion which called on other religions to observe peaceful co-existence ?

The Qur'ān has made it incumbent on the Muslims to believe in all the Prephets and respect them equally. According to the Qur'ān, if a man disbelieves in one Prophet he disbelieves in all the Prophets. This is the reason why even at the time when the People of the Book were the enemies of the Holy Prophet and they left no stone unturned in disrespecting him and indulging in hostile activities, Muslims bowed down in reverence whenever they uttered the name of Christ and Moses. Even today in this age of decline when Jews and Christians are oppressing the Muslims, the latter pronounce the words "Peace be on him" after uttering the names of the Prophets who were sent to them.

A clear proof of Islam's desire for peaceful co-

existence with the followers of other religions is that it took initiative in calling the People of the Book to meet the Muslims on a common platform: "O people of the Book, come to a word which is common between you and us" (iii. 64). Today it is said that every person should have the freedom of belief and religion. But it is the Qur'ān which fourteen hundred years ago made the declaration: "There is no compulsion in religion." It was the result of this principle that Islam granted all possible safeguards to followers of other religions in their religious affairs. The Holy Prophet went so far as to allow them to perform their religious rites in his Mosque which, next to the Ka'bah, is the most honoured sanctuary of the Muslims.

When a deputation of the Christians of Najrān came to the Holy Prophet, it was permitted by him to conduct its worship in the Prophet's Mosque. These were the People of the Book. But even those who were idolaters and polythyeists enjoyed the same toleration and large-hearted treatment from the Holy Prophet.

The traditionist Zurqānī says that when a deputation of Banū Thaqīf came from Ṭā'if, the Prophet made arrangements for its stay in the Mosque. The words of Zurqānī are:

"When these people came to the Prophet, he ordered that a tent should be pitched for them in a

corner of the Prophet's Mosque" (Zurqānī, IV, 8).

In some Traditions it is said that some Companions of the Prophet felt uneasy and said that those were unclean and filthy people. Thereupon the Prophet said: "Their uncleanliness has nothing to do with the earth."

The idolaters and polytheists indulged in all sorts of hostile activities against the Holy Prophet, but the Qur'ān asked the Muslims not to revile their gods and goddesses:

"Do not revile those whom the polytheists worship besides God, lest they revile God out of ignorance" (vi. 108).

5

JIHĀD (STRUGGLE) IS A LIFE-DUTY OF THE MUSLIMS

Jihād is an Arabic word. Its literal meaning is to strive with all one's power in the pursuit of some object. In Muslim law *Jihād* means to elevate the word of God and to lay down one's wealth and life or use one's power of speech and writing in the struggle against the enemies of Islam.

Jihād is of three kinds. First, struggle against the enemy; second, struggle against thoughts produced by Satan; third, struggle against one's own lower desires. Thus *Jihād* means to strive to remove any obstacle which prevents one from doing obedience to God. The highest form of *Jihād* is to fight in the way of God and risk one's life therein. The Qur'ān calls it "fighting in the way of God". But generally, when the word *Jihād* is used, it is understood to mean fighting the enemies of Islam, and this meaning is also quite correct.

It is necessary for *Jihād* to purify one's inten-

tions first. All things in Islam depend on one's intentions. What one does and with what intention is very important. The Prophet says: "Works depend on one's intentions." We can receive a reward for our works only when we have in sight the pleasure of God in doing some good work. If someone spends money in charity with a view to becoming famous as a generous man or teaches the Qur'ān or preaches religion with the intention of gaining fame as a religious scholar or fights in war so that he may be called a brave man—all these works are good in appearance, but because the object of these works is not to earn the pleasure of God, instead of getting a reward, such an agent will be held answerable on the Day of Judgment. Therefore, it is necessary for one who fights the enemy of Islam to purify one's intention and to remember that the true believer aims only at martyrdom. He does not fight for booty or for conquest of land.

In the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth* many praises have been showered on these who take part in holy war and our Prophet has stated as the minimum condition for one's being a Muslim that if a Muslim cannot take part in the holy war due to circumstances beyond his control, he should at least aspire to be one of the fighters in the cause of God. The Prophet said:

"If a person who never took part in the holy war,

nor did he ever yearn for fighting in the cause of God, died in this state, he died the death of a hypocrite."

The teachings of the Prophet show that he considered *Jihād* to be superior to all other forms of worship. According to a Tradition of *Ṣāḥīḥ Bukhārī* he was asked who was the best man. He said: "The believer who fights in the cause of God with his wealth and life."

On another occasion he said: "If you take part in the holy war, that is better than the worship of sixty years while living with your wife and children."

He also said: "To fight in the cause of God for one night while guarding the frontiers of Islam is better than praying to God one thousand nights and fasting for one thousand days."

The Qur'ān says: "Those who are slain while fighting in the cause of God, call them not dead. They live for ever."

Outwardly, *Jihād* is not one of the five pillars of Islam, but it is the essence and spirit of those five pillars. *Kalimah*, Prayer, Fasting, Pilgrimage and *Zakāt* (poor-tax) are the five pillars of Islam on which the edifice of Islam has been erected. But a building does not consist only of pillars. The pillars are meant to provide support to the roof of the building. *Jihād* is the roof of this building of Islam in the absence of which man cannot find a shade in the hot

sun of his sins.

Those who understand the secrets of Islamic law are of opinion that the object of Islamic worship is to habituate man to a life which is entirely subject to the will of God. Man should not live for himself. He should so live that the world should put on the colour with which God desires to colour it and the framework of deeds in which God desires to mould humanity should become predominant in the world. This is not possible except when man dedicates himself entirely to this mission, and this dedication is the real *Jihād* and Islamic forms of worship are a preliminary stage to this *Jihād*.

The Islamic forms of worship are thus a training course for creating the necessary qualities of a warrior of faith. If these forms of worship do not achieve this object, they have no value in the sight of God. A deep study of the Holy Qur'ān shows that limits have been laid down for all other forms of worship. For example, only five prayers have been made incumbent on the Muslims. Even if a man has got the capacity to offer ten prayers daily, he is required to pray only five times. Similarly, if a man has got the strength to fast daily, even then he is required to fast only during the month of Ramaḍān. The same applies to annual Pilgrimage and *Zakāt*. But *Jihād* is a duty about which the command has been given that you should devote all your energies

to it. If you make inadequate preparations for *Jihād*, in spite of having the capacity to make adequate preparations, you will be taken to task. The Holy Qur'ān says: "Prepare to fight in the cause of God according to your strength and courage."

These and other similar statements throw light on the importance of *Jihād*; these lead us to believe that the collective greatness of the Muslims depends upon the spirit of *Jihād*. So long as Muslims perform the duty of *Jihād*, no nation can compete with them here and in the Hereafter.

Islamic *Jihād* is not directed to expanding the frontiers of the Muslim States. It is a crime of great magnitude in Islam to shed the blood of innocent people. *Jihād* becomes necessary when Muslims living in some territory are being persecuted, their mosques are razed to the ground and their rights are being trampled upon or some enemy country invades a Muslim territory. Under these conditions, it becomes the duty of each and every Muslim to fight in the cause of God. If he cannot fight in the battlefield, he should look after the houses of those who are fighting. He should counter the moves of those who spread false remours, and sacrifice his wealth in the cause of God. If he cannot do even this, he should at least try to raise the morale of his countrymen by his tongue and pen.

It is true that many other nations fight for their

existence and they fight bravely. But history bears witness that these nations do not observe any ethical code in warfare. They lay hands on the female population of the enemy and they massacre indiscriminately the children, the aged and the crippled. They burn houses and farms. Islamic *Jihād* is distinguished from all other warfare in that such acts are not permitted by it. It is even commanded that the prisoners of war should be well treated and they should not be kept hungry or thirsty. In the course of war, children, the aged, the crippled, the blind and the worshippers in places of worship should not be touched. If an enemy is slain, it is not permitted to cut his hands and feet. These and other directions given by Islam have established an ethical code of warfare for the first time in the history of the world and it has been conclusively proved to the nations of the world that the followers of Islam fight a holy war (*Jihād*) and do not create disorder (*Fasād*) in society.

6

ISLAM AND LAWFUL ACQUISITION OF WEALTH

Those who have analysed the Islamic system of life are aware of the fact that Islam prohibits all means of earning wealth which are based on exploitation. Islam declares that all earnings are unlawful in which wealth is acquired without effort and struggle.

This is the reason why Islam assigns great importance to lawful acquisition of wealth. It approves of all professions, skills, industries and even manual labour and declares all those actions as a great sin by which man acquires wealth without effort and labour.

Scholars of Islam know full well that those who earn wealth by their labour have not only been given the glad tidings that they would be rewarded with Paradise, but they have also been told that they would enjoy the company of the Prophets and virtuous people. The traditionist Baihaqī relates a

famous Tradition of the Prophet in which the latter says:

"He who earns wealth by lawful means and puts forth labour so that he may not have to beg for alms and may be able to feed his family, will meet God in such a condition that his face will be as luminous as the moon on the night of the fourteenth."

Kanz al-'Ammāl also records a Tradition having the same import which says: "God loves His servant who labours and struggles to earn his living so that he may not stretch his hand before other people."

It is also related in *Kanz al-'Ammāl* that a poor Companion of the Prophet was begging for alms. The Prophet asked him as to why he was begging for alms. He replied: "I and my children are starving." The Prophet then asked him whether he had any household goods. He said that he had nothing in his house except a mat and a cup. The Prophet ordered him to bring these two things. When he brought them he asked his Companions whether any one of them would purchase them. One of the Companions expressed his readiness to purchase them for one dirham. Another offered two dirhams. The Prophet sold those two articles for two dirhams. Then he turned to the beggar and said: "Purchase grain for one dirham for your children and purchase an axe with the other dirham and bring it to me." He obeyed the orders of the Holy Prophet. He purchased

an axe and came back to the Prophet. The Prophet fixed a handle to the axe and asked him to go to the forest and hew the wood and then sell it in the market. He also asked him to come to him after some days. When he came back to the Prophet after a few days, he was on the road to prosperity, and this prosperity came to him because the Prophet had shown him the way to lawful acquisition of wealth.

Islam says that lawful acquisition of wealth is the grace of God. When the Qur'ān commands Muslims to acquire wealth lawfully, it says: "Disperse yourselves on the earth and labour hard to seek the grace of God."

It should be remembered that for lawful acquisition of wealth Islam approves even of handicraft. This is the reason why among the influential Companions of the Prophet, there were people of all professions and skills. Those who could carry on trade engaged themselves in commerce, those who could mend shoes mended shoes, those who could work with wood worked as carpenters, and those who could work with iron were iron-smiths. Among the well-known Companion, Suhaib was a blacksmith, Yāsir and many others worked as carpenters, but all of them had the same standing in society. There were very few Companions who did not do manual work to earn their living.

When the Muslims migrated from Mecca and

came to Medina, all the paths for acquiring a living were closed to them. But gradually they adopted the same professions which gave them their livelihood in Mecca. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Auf was one of those distinguished Companions who were engaged in commercial transactions in Mecca. When he came to Medina, he was given financial support by an eminent Anṣār, but he went straight to the market and engaged himself in trade with a few dirhams. His business expanded so much that he was considered one of the biggest traders of Medina.

Abū Bakr used to load himself with bundles of cloth till the early days of his Caliphate and he did not feel ashamed to sell cloth in the environs of Medina.

In our history al-Khayyāṭ, al-Bazzāz, al-Khayyām, and al-Khabbāz have acquired great fame for their learning. The first of these was a tailor who sewed cloths; the second was a cloth-dealer who loaded himself with bundles of cloth and wandered about selling it; the third sewed tents and dealt in them; the fourth baked bread.

But since in Islam no degradation attaches to any profession, all these scholars are mentioned with great respect in history according to their professions.

Islam attaches degradation only to one thing. It regards only one activity as being lowly. This is to

usurp the property or wealth of one's fellows. If any profession or business is prohibited in Islam, it is the business of exploitation. This is not only unlawful but is regarded as a major sin in society.

Whatever the form of exploitation, whether theft or usurpation, hoarding, black-marketing or bribery, Islam does not tolerate it.

7

ISLAM AND GAMBLING

Before the advent of Islam, like other many-sided evils, gambling was also on the increase. The Arabian society, ignorant and illiterate as it was, had fallen a prey to this evil. Gambling fairs were held, and rich and poor took part in them according to their means. Drinking bouts were also held. People tried their fortunes for many days. Many times these gatherings which began with drinking and gambling ended in fights and riots. Besides Arabia, many other countries had also come within this vicious circle. In the Roman, Egyptian and Greek culture, gambling was not only not disapproved, but it was regarded as a mark of one's opulence. Even cultures permeated by religion did not realise the great evils hidden in gambling.

The Jewish and Christian civilisations also flourished. But history shows that they were not successful in rooting out this evil. They even failed to arouse public opinion against it. In proof of this

we can cite the example of Monte Carlo, the greatest gambling house in England, in which crores of rupees are put at stake annually. When Islam came, it described the evils of gambling in the most effective language and prohibited it for the Muslims. If the Qur'ān is studied, it will become clear that since the Arabs had been habituated to gambling for a long period of time, God revealed His commandments regarding its prohition only gradually. In the Qur'ān the first verse regarding gambling occurs in the chapter "Cow" where it is said :

"People ask you regarding wine and gambling. Tell them that the element of sinfulness is predominant in them. There are some advantages also, but the sin involved is greater."

This verse did not clearly condemn and prohibit gambling. It was only said that sometimes the gambler gains money without any effort, but its moral evil is so great that a few material advantages are of no account. In the Traditions it is recorded that when this verse was revealed, many Muslims totally gave up wine and gambling without waiting for the command of their prohibition. They quickly realised that something which is predominantly disadvantageous cannot meet with the approval of Islam.

8

RELATION BETWEEN THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

There are things for the understanding of which it is necessary to repeat them often. At this time I will deal with a subject about which I have expressed my views before. I am repeating this subject because it is one of the important demands of our time, which we have forgotten and due to this forgetfulness many evils are cropping up. If we realise this and fulfil the demands set before us, all evils will disappear and all diseases will be cured. I am not complaining against those who never visit the mosques nor have any interest in religion. My complaint is directed against the religious-minded people who are pious and offer their prayers regularly but are forgetful of this great demand of religion.

The question is: what is that evil?

The evil is that every man is absorbed in himself. He has no interest in his environment and society;

he gives no thought as to whither his society is going, and what is the direction his environment is taking. If somebody says that he can reform himself without reforming others, this is wrong and impracticable. This has never happened, nor will it happen in future.

Let us consider whether any individual is isolated and lonely in this world. If you think over the matter, you will come to the conclusion that no man is lonely and isolated. Every man is a member of some family. He has his parents, his brothers and sisters, his wife and children, and his family relations. In other fields of life also he is not alone. If he is a trader or a shopkeeper, he has his relations with other traders and shopkeepers. If he is employed in some office, he has his colleagues, officers and subordinates. If he is a student, he has close relations with his teachers and fellow students. If you apply this principle on a large scale you will find that man is not alone anywhere. He has to deal with other human beings at every turn. If they are following the right path, he will find it easier to follow the same path. If his colleagues in the office approve of bribery, he will find it difficult to avoid bribery; if, on the other hand, his colleagues condemn and disapprove of bribery, he will find it easy to take the path to rectitude. If his environment at home is vicious, it will not be surprising if he falls a prey to

false views, because in moulding his conduct he cannot ignore the views of the members of his family. To ignore the influence of human relations for the sake of principles and to fight the prevailing opinion is the work of only a few men. Every man cannot stand against the buffetings of storms nor can every man face troubles and adversities for the sake of principles.

This relation between the individual and his society was aptly described by the Holy Prophet in a parable which says:

"A boat is sailing in a river. Some people are sitting in the lower storey while others are sitting in the upper storey. The drinking water is in the upper storey. If the people sitting in the lower storey make a hole in the boat in order to save themselves the trouble of fetching water from the upper storey, the boat will sink and, unless the people in the upper storey quickly set the matters right, both the groups of people, those in the upper and in the lower storeys, will be drowned."

Thus the relation between the individual and society is like that of the boat and its passengers. If one is drowned, all will be drowned. If a man shuts his eyes and does not look to his society, if he does not care about its educational system, about the way in which the members of the assemblies are elected, about the standard of efficiency displayed by the representatives of the people, about the condition

of the masses and about the way in which the machinery of Government and politics is being run, about the conditions inside and outside the country, if he leaves the world to its fate thinking that if the world is destroyed, he will be able to save himself, he is entirely in the wrong. He will perish with others.

9

INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE REFORMATION

To make false statements in order to humour someone or to please children for some time has been severely condemned by the *Sharī'ah* of Islam. A Tradition of the Prophet says :

"'Abdullah b. 'Āmir says: Once the Holy Prophet visited us. My mother called me and said: Come here, I will give you something. The Prophet asked her: What do you intend to give him? She said: I will give him a date. The Prophet said: If, after saying this, you fail to give him anything, a sin will be entered against you in your register of deeds." (*Sunan Abū Dawūd*).

Thus Islam does not approve of making a false promise to a child or to make a false statement before him in order to please him, because this practice will induce him to believe that telling lies is an ordinary thing and, when he grows up, it is quite likely that he may become a liar.

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The child is, after all, a human being. The traditionists condemned making false gestures even to animals. It is related of a traditionist that he heard about a person that he related a Tradition from the Holy Prophet. After travelling for two days he reached him. He saw him showing an empty corn-bag to his horse in order to control him. Although the traditionist was tired, he at once turned his back and intended to return. When his host saw him returning, he inquired the reason thereof. He said: "I had heard that you relate a Tradition from the Prophet. I travelled for two long days to come to you. But when I came here, I saw you showing an empty corn-bag to your horse. I thought that when a man can deceive an animal by making false gestures, he can equally well deceive human being. Therefore I do not find you competent to relate *ḥadīth* (Tradition) and I am going back."

This is the attitude of Islam towards falsehood. But it is regrettable that we are moving away from this attitude. Falsehood is reigning in our individual as well as collective life. Friendships are based on falsehood. Politics is soaked in falsehood. Justice cannot be obtained from courts without resorting to falsehood. Even so we complain that our problems are becoming complicated every day. My friends, I give you an easy prescription for individual and collective reformation. This prescription has

not been suggested by me but by Islam. It is that if you desire to change the present conditions, effect one change in it. Base everything on truthfulness instead of falsehood. Your society will soon become an ideal society.

10

EVERY BELIEVER IS THE MIRROR OF HIS BROTHER

The Holy Prophet has said: "Every believer is the mirror of his brother." This seems a small matter, but it presents a comprehensive picture of Muslim society. What are the characteristics of a mirror? Its first characteristic is that if you stand before it, it will reveal to you all your features. Neither your beauty nor the black spots on your face remain hidden from you. Its second characteristic is that it is not guilty of any exaggeration in showing your features. If you have a spot on your face, it will show it exactly as it is, neither more nor less. Similarly, your beauty and adornment are also revealed exactly as they are. Its third characteristic is that it talks to you in your face. In your absence, it does not find fault with you.

"A believer is the mirror of his brother." This means that one believer stands in the same relation to his brother as a mirror does. He acknowledges the

merits and virtues of his brother and indulges in sympathetic criticism of his vices and defects. He points out his mistakes, raises his morale by acknowledging his virtues. In giving an account of his merits and demerits he does not resort to exaggeration. He neither overemphasises his defects nor flatters him by over-stressing his virtues. Along with this he does not find fault with him in his absence. He does not disgrace him by carrying tales about him. In view of this relationship between the believers, the Holy Qur'ān has prohibited backbiting and said that it is like eating the flesh of one's dead brother. The Qur'ān says: "And do not find fault with others nor indulge in backbiting. Will any of you like to eat his dead brother's flesh? Fear God. God accepts repentance and is compassionate."

The Qur'ānic statement has been elaborated in a *ḥadīth* which says that when the Holy Prophet ascended the heavens, he witnessed, among other scenes, the spectacle of a group of men removing the flesh of their faces with iron nails. When he asked who those people were, he was told that they used to backbite.

Generally, when people find fault with others in their absence, they say this is quite true: "I can tell him in his face." This satisfies the fault-finder as well as his addressee. But this is self-deception. Backbiting means precisely this that you talk ill of a man

in his absence. If he is free from this evil of which you have accused him, then this is slander, for which a regular punishment has been prescribed by the Islamic law. Once the Prophet was asked what constituted backbiting. He said: "Your mentioning something about your brother which he disapproves." The questioner asked him again: "If the defect exists in him?" The Prophet replied: "If the defect really exists in him, you are guilty of backbiting; if not, you are guilty of slander."

11

THE POSITION OF A WIFE IN ISLAMIC SOCIETY

At the time of marriage such large amounts of money are fixed as dower that a middle-class husband finds it difficult to pay it. The result is that, although in the marriage deed, the amount of dower is laid down, neither the husband takes thought that he has to pay the dower, nor does the family of the wife care to receive it.

There is no doubt that in Islam large amounts have been fixed as dower. 'Umar fixed 40,000 dirhams as dower in a marriage. 'Abdullah b. 'Umar and some other Companions of the Holy Prophet fixed 10,000 dirhams as dower. In the marriage between the Holy Prophet and Umm Ḥabībah, the Negus of Abyssinia fixed 4000 dirhams as dower on behalf of the Holy Prophet. But what was the pattern of conduct laid down by the Holy Prophet in this regard will appear from the fact that he fixed only 500 dirhams as dower for his daughter Fāṭimah

which comes to about 145 tolas of silver at the present rate. If a man is well-to-do and the parties willingly fix a large amount as dower, there is no harm in it. But the difficulty is that in this regard custom rules our conduct. Whether the husband has or has not the necessary means, large amounts are fixed as dower until there are quarrels on this matter at the time of marriage and the marriage party turns back ; but still we pay no heed.

Dower is a right of the woman and the man is legally bound to pay it. But we are so careless about it that very few examples can be given in which the dower is paid to the wife. Stress is laid on the wife being persuaded to exempt the husband from paying the dower. Most people do not try to have themselves even exempted and die without giving the dower to their wives. If the wives do not exempt them, nobody can say what will happen to them in the Hereafter.

One reason for family embarrassments is that somehow the idea has come to stay in the minds of husbands that they need not be very intimate with their wives, that they may not talk with them freely and in a mood of pleasantry, that they may scold and beat them on small matters—because this is their right. If a man talks with his wife in a mood of pleasantry, he will be called a hen-pecked husband. People do not even think that if husband-wife rela-

tions are not good, this will have a very bad effect on the children, and the peace of the family will be disturbed. Try to compare our conduct with the teachings of the Holy Prophet in the light of the following Prophetic statement: "From the point of view of faith and belief, the most perfect among you is one whose moral conduct is good and the best people among you are those who are good to their wives and children." Islam says that it is a sign of the perfection of one's faith if one treats women well. But we have made it a sign of manliness to be rude to our own wives. Islam has declared that woman is like the soft and delicate rib and if force is applied to straighten the rib, it will break. But we apply the stick to remove its crookedness. The way in which women are treated in our countryside is far worse than the way in which animals are treated. Men think it their birthright to beat their women. But we must remember that, according to Islamic law, a woman can be beaten only on four counts and that too with the following restrictions:

(*a*) No mark is left on her body.

(*b*) She is not beaten on her face or on any other delicate spot.

(*c*) No harm comes to any of her limbs.

It should also be understood that a woman cannot be beaten for ordinary misbehaviour. Four grounds have been stated by the Islamic law for

beating a woman:

(1) If a woman does not offer prayers. (Has any Muslim husband thought over the fact whether he has at any time admonished his wife for not offering prayers?)

(2) If she goes outside the home without the permission of her husband.

(3) If she does not adorn herself even at the insistence of her husband.

(4) If the husband calls her to his bed and she refuses without a legally valid reason.

The Islamic law has thus a definite set of rules for punishing the wife. But our condition is that if the wife makes some mistake in cooking the food, we begin to punish her. We do not even think that cooking food for which we beat her is not her legal duty. Is she a servant that she be held responsible for cooking the food?

You may be surprised to learn that under the Islamic law a wife is not legally responsible for cooking the food. On the other hand, it is the legal duty of the husband to provide sustenance to his wife, to make arrangements for her meals and if the wife belongs to a family where maid-servants are employed to cook food, it is the duty of the husband to have her food cooked by employing maid-servants. It is quite a different matter if the wife consents to cook the food herself in view of

the financial condition of her husband, as happens generally in our society. But if she does not consent to cook food, she cannot be legally forced to do it. In such conditions, it is the responsibility of the husband to provide her with cooked food.

12

FAULT-FINDING IS THE GREATEST EVIL

The Holy Qur'ān says:

"God loveth not that evil should be noised abroad in public speech except where injustice hath been done: for God it is Who knoweth and heareth all things" (iv. 148).

The context of this verse is that in the previous verses mention was being made of hypocrites. The command is given that no particular person should be called a hypocrite, because God does not like that fault should be found with others or that one should talk ill of another person either in his absence or in his presence, except when some religious need requires this. For example, if a person is ill-treated or oppressed, he can complain about his ill-treatment.

Talking ill of others may take two forms. First, one may talk ill of another in some place where he is himself present along with others and, secondly, one may talk ill of another in his absence. The Islamic law declares that both these forms of talking

ill of another person are unlawful. Generally, when a person talks ill of another he says: "What I am saying is so irrefutable that I can tell him this on his face." But merely making such a declaration cannot make lawful what is unlawful. The Islamic law declares that backbiting is unlawful. But what is backbiting except that if a person suffers from some fault or defect, his fault or defect may be mentioned in his absence. If the person is free from that particular defect or evil, this is not backbiting but slander, and the Islamic law has prescribed a regular punishment for it. An idea of how greatly God disapproves of backbiting can be formed by the fact that the Qur'ān likens it to eating the flesh of one's dead brother and the Holy Prophet has declared that backbiting is worse than polytheism, because if a person repents of his polytheistic beliefs he can be forgiven, but backbiting cannot be forgiven unless the injured person himself is ready to forgive it.

There are exceptional cases where a person is permitted to talk ill of others. But this cannot be made a pretext for indulging in it in the normal course of things. For example, if a person is trying to get his daughter married to someone. He is seeking your advice. In such a case it is your duty to give him correct advice, even if this leads to talking ill of another person.

Or take the example of the national leaders. You

can talk ill of them in order to forewarn your nation. Thus, it is true that sometimes a religious need arises that forces you to talk ill of others. But without some such need, you should not indulge in backbiting. To avoid talking ill of others, an easy device is that if you intend to talk ill of another person, you should look to your own self and indulge in some self-criticism.

'Abdullah b. 'Ābbās says: "When you think of some evil in another person, ponder over your own defects. See how many evils you have committed. You will be safe from backbiting." Not only this, you should even avoid thinking ill of others. This is the backbiting of the heart. If you come across some apparent evil, give a good explanation for it. It is quite possible that the person may be well-intentioned but he may be acting under some pressure. Find some good aspect of your brother's action. This is better than declaring that he is guilty of some misdeed.

If someone tries to talk ill of another person before you, take courage and stop him from doing so. Tell him plainly that you do not want to hear such talk. If, however, you are forced by circumstances to hear another person talking ill of his brother, do not believe in it until you have confirmed it. In our society unfortunately people easily believe what they hear about others. Not only this, they carry

the tale to others. Such people should bear in mind the statement of the Holy Prophet: "It is enough to stamp a man as a liar that he hears something about another person and passes it on to others."

It is true that those who are talked ill of are greatly distressed when the report reaches them. But I will advise them not to fall a prey to mental trouble. If they suffer from some defect they should try to remove it. If not, they are being falsely accused and those who backbite them are paving the way for the forgiveness of their sins and addition to their merits and virtues.

It is said of Ḥasan of Baṣrah that he came to know that a person was talking ill of him. He purchased some precious dates from the market and sent them to the person as a gift giving him the following message: "You are transferring your virtuous deeds to my register of deeds. I am sending this present for the good you are doing to me. I regret that I cannot fully recompense you."

These are some of the bad aspects of backbiting. From this you can form an idea as to how a society can be based on mutual love and harmony, when this evil spreads in it. If you feel aggrieved in the face of a situation, raise the standard of revolt against this evil. First of all, avoid it yourself. Then preach against it to the members of your family and your friends. When people are convinced that you will

protect their honour in private and public, they will start loving you, and you will love them. If this goes on in a widening circle, things will change very soon. A believer is loved by all the people precisely because he does not stretch his hand against the respect of others. The Holy Prophet has said: "A believer is one from whose hands and tongue other believers are safe."

13

SYSTEM OF JUSTICE AND COOPERATION

The birth of Islam was a declaration that mankind has reached its maturity. In accordance with this declaration, mankind was considered competent to be informed that the heavens and the earth and all that is between them have been subjugated to man. Before man reached his maturity, this was not possible. Therefore, no religion or sacred book gave the glad tidings to humanity. It was due to this maturity that in every department of life a system of justice and equity was given to man. Thus the Islamic system of worship is marked by this mode of balance and equity which distinguishes it from other religions.

Many examples can be given from the *Ḥadīth* (Traditions of the Holy Prophet) and the biography of the Holy Prophet to show that the law-giver has, by his deed and sayings, paid special attention to the establishment of balance and equity in worship and admonished those who indulge in excesses. For

example, it was said by the Prophet that taking meals in the early morning before the beginning of the fast is a *Sunnah* (Prophet's practice) and will be rewarded accordingly, even though it be only one morsel. Special attention has also been paid to the fixing of times for breaking and beginning the fast. This is also an example of the balance and moderation to be observed in acts of worship. The most interesting thing is that it has been prohibited to inflict hardship on oneself through fasting. The sick and travellers have been given special concessions. Women have been permitted to give up fasting while they are faced by some natural impediments Every attempt has been made to see that fasting does not prevent a person from performing his normal duties so that nobody may say that, because he was fasting, he was not able to participate in the holy war or could not perform the ordinary business of his life.

This mode of combining worship with the routine business of life is not found in any other religion. In other words, this balanced combination of spirituality with the material aspect of life was not possible before mankind reached its maturity Before this, there was no justification for such a combination. We Muslims should thank God that He selected us for the manifestation of this maturity of mankind. We should not forget this position of ours for which we have been given the title of the nation

of the middle path, nor should we forget that we are the people through whom justice and balance have been established in every department of life.

This kindness of God lays a great responsibility on us, whose fulfilment is our religious as well as worldly duty. Therefore, we should ponder over the fact whether we are helping to maintain this balance and equity by abandoning worship and following our desires Is it not the same excess and defect of which mankind was guilty in its childhood? Abandonment of worship is surely a defect and does not benefit a nation which was selected to manifest the maturity of mankind and which was moulded and shaped under Divine directions at a juncture of history when mankind was passing out of its childhood and entering the age of maturity.

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14

MAN AND FAITHFULNESS

Men are busy during the daytime in their work and take rest at night. But the dog does not sleep at night. He keeps awake and guards the house of his master. At night there is a glitter in his eyes. He can see easily in the dark. He is so faithful that even if another dog comes near the house of his master, he cannot tolerate that he should enter the house. If you take him to a distant place and leave him there, he will return after making a search for the house of his master. His nose is so constituted that he can find out by smelling whether the man who is coming is a friend or an enemy of his master. It is a property of his saliva that if he licks his wounds, they are healed. Even his broken bones are joined again.

If man ponders over these facts relating to a small animal, he can learn many lessons. Today when you want to abuse a man, you call him a dog But the fact is that dog's faithfulness sets an example

even to man, if the latter does not feel insulted. A clear proof of this is furnished by a news published some days ago in the newspapers. A dog by mistake bit his own master. When he became aware of his mistake, he felt very sad and gave up taking food until he died of starvation. Just ponder. Man keeps away the dog and uses his name as a term of abuse. But the dog's faithfulness is so conspicuous that when he bites his master by mistake and comes to know of his error, he not only gives up taking food but slowly pines away to death.

Man is also a servant of his Master and the creature of a Creator. Man has come in this world to obey his Creator, to worship and to serve his Master. Let man indulge in some self-analysis and see how many commands of his Master he has ignored and how many laws of his Master he has violated. Let him think over the fact that the legs given him by his Master have been used by him in walking a path opposite to the path prescribed for him by his Creator. He has used the hands given him by God and his eyes with which he has been blessed by his Creator in defiance of his Master's will. He has also filled his mind given him by God with evil thoughts forbidden to him by the Creator. If he does not feel ashamed in disobeying God's commands and rebelling against Him, who is more worthy of being abused, the dog or the disobedient man ?

In this connection I recall to mind an important incident of history. A holy man said something wonderful which brought the Tartars within the fold of Islam. The mission which could not be fulfilled by armies, swords and lances was carried to its conclusion by the tongue of a truthful man. The incident relates to a *ṣūfī* saint of Bukhārā, Shaikh Jamaluddīn, who was passing through Kāshghar. Unaware, he entered the enclosure of a ruler of the Tartars entry to which was prohibited He was arrested by the Tartars and presented before the ruler. The ruler at once, pointing to his dog, asked him whether he was better or the dog. Shaikh Jamāluddin gave a reply which is worthy of being remembered for all time. He said : "If I die in a state of faith and belief, I am better ; but if I die in such a condition that my heart is devoid of faith and belief, then this dog is better." This reply opened the door of Islam on the Tartars. The ruler was very much impressed by this reply. He called upon the Shaikh to explain what faith was. When Shaikh Jamāluddīn explained the meaning of faith, the ruler was much impressed and said : "Just now, I am not an absolute monarch. When my rule becomes firmly established, you come to me ; I will accept Islam."

Shaikh Jamāluddīn remembered this. On his death-bed he asked his son that when Tughlaq Taimūr became king, he should go to him and re-

mind him of his promise. After the death of the Shaikh, his son went to the King Tughlaq Taimūr, but he was not allowed to meet the King. Disgusted, he decided to follow in the footsteps of his father. One day he pronounced the call to prayer near the bed-room of the King in the early morning. The King was awakened by the call to prayer and ordered angrily that the man who had awakened him at this inopportune moment should be brought before him. When the ruler enquired of him the reason for doing so, he reminded him of the promise he had made to his father. Thereupon Tughlaq Taimūr and his entire army accepted Islam.

15

THE PATH OF MODERATION

Let us discuss the viewpoint of those who say that material progress and worldly prosperity are the real objective of Islam and that those people are committing an error who refer again and again to the Hereafter and thus stand in the way of the nation preoccupying itself with the business of this world. In the verses given below, let us see how the Qur'ān contrasts the life of this world with the life of the Hereafter:

"Say: Short is the enjoyment of this world. The Hereafter is the best for those who do right" (iv. 77).

Further, the Qur'ān says :

"This life of the present is nothing but temporary convenience. It is the Hereafter that is the Home that will last" (xi. 39).

In another place, it is said :

"What is the life of this world but play and amusement. But best is the Home in the Hereafter for those who are righteous" (vi. 32).

If a glance is cast on the Traditions of the Prophet, it will become apparent that the Prophet has condemned this world and its seekers in different ways.

Abū Hurairah says that the Prophet said : The slave of dīnār is deprived of the grace of God and the slave of dirham is far away from the grace of God.

In Bukhārī and Muslim it is reported by 'Amr b. 'Auf that the Prophet said : I am not afraid that you will fall into poverty. But I am afraid that the doors of worldly prosperity will be opened on you as happened in the case of your predecessors. Then you will begin to love what they loved and you will run madly after the world. Then it will destroy you as it destroyed those before you.

These few references show that Islam has severely condemned engrossment in the material pursuits of life and the greed of worldly riches. It does not want that its followers should be enslaved by worldly wealth and begin to love monetary gain so much that they forget the Hereafter.

It should be remembered that Islam does not prevent us from engaging ourselves in worldly pursuits. It wants us to deal with worldly matters in a handsome way. But it also does not permit that man should engage himself solely in the amassing of wealth by means, lawful or unlawful. Its viewpoint

is that if you observe the limits laid down by it in your worldly pursuits, you are acting religiously, but if you disregard those limits, you become the brethren of the devil. Therefore, the path of moderation is that you should avail yourself of all lawful means to enjoy the worldly gifts of God; you should try to acquire them but you should not love them so much as to forget the Hereafter. Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī has made the significant remark : "The world should be kept in one's hands, it may be kept in one's pocket, but it should not be kept in the heart."

16

THINGS FOR WHICH MAN WILL BE HELD RESPONSIBLE BEFORE GOD

The Qur'ān says that on the Day of Judgment man will be asked about his wealth as to how and whence he has earned it. It will not be asked how much he has earned or whether he was a millionaire or whether he had a bungalow, a buke and a bank balance, because these things will be of no importance in that last Court of Judgment. There the standard of respect is not whether one is rich or poor. There the standard of distinction will be man's piety. Therefore, the question that will be asked will not be what and how much he earned. The question will be whence he has earned his wealth, whether he has earned it by lawful or unlawful means. If the wealth has been amassed by fleecing the poor or by doing injury to the rights of others, by lending money on usury or smuggling or black-marketing, what will be your reply ? And this unlawful wealth

of which you are proud shall be of no avail to you.

The Qur'ān also says that it will be asked on the Day of Judgment as to where you have spent your wealth.

The Questioner will enquire: I had given this wealth to you as a trust and made it clear to you that you will give a due share of it to your family, your relations, the orphans, the widows, the neighbours and the travellers. On what items have you spent it? Was it that, instead of regarding it as a trust, you thought of it as your property, and without taking into consideration the will of the Property-Owner you spent it wherever you liked. If this is true, then it is as difficult for you to enter Our Paradise as for a camel to enter the eye of a needle.

Another question which will be asked of man will be whether he practised what he knew. There will be no question as to what degree he held or how many books he wrote. He will be only asked as to how far he practised what he knew.

It is possible that an illiterate person may not have knowledge of detailed commandments. But did he not know that usurping the rights of others, telling lies, spreading sedition, creating quarrels and deceiving other people are disapproved? He certainly knew all this; therefore, he will have to answer how far his practical conduct conformed to his knowledge. One of the duties of men is to acquire

knowledge. Some people say that you should not listen to the preaching of the scholars. If you are not able to practise after you have gained knowlegde of the religious commands, you will become sinful. This is sheer folly. Not to acquire knowledge itself constitutes a sin because on the Day of Judgment, it will be asked in what business you spent your life. This includes the question whether you spent your life in acquiring knowledge or passed your life in ignorance, and whether you practised what you knew. This question will be asked of the ignorant as well as the learned and no man will be left without answering this question. It should be remembered that the Examiner will be One Whom nobody can deceive. No recommendation will be accepted. Think that when you stammer while talking to a Commissioner or a Deputy Commissioner, how can you talk before One before Whom the position of the greatest of governors and kings is inferior to a fly and a mosquito. It is His kindness that He has already shown to you the examination paper and appointed a teacher in the person of Muḥammad the Prophet (peace be on him) He has also given you a whole lifetime to solve the question paper. Those people are certainly unfortunate who fail in this great examination in spite of these facilities.

17

BE THE FRIENDS OF THE TRUTHFUL

God has laid on you only the duty to distinguish between religious scholars who support truth and those religious scholars who support unrighteous causes In every period these two kinds of religious scholars have existed. The religious scholars who support truth are never non-existent. If they become non-existent, the world itself will come to an end. So long as the world exists, religious scholars supporting righteous causes will continue to exist. God has commanded not only the Arabs but all the Muslims of the world to keep the company of the truthful. This command is for all periods This shows that religious scholars supporting righteous causes will continue to exist in all periods. If a man is literate, he should read the books of religious scholars because this is a period of the printed word. Religious books are abundant You read the books without preconceived notions and the religious scholar whom you find most satisfactory from his

book should be acknowledged by you as your authority. If you are not literate, you should hear the speeches of religious scholars and thus make your decision. If you are not content with speeches, you should spare some time—if you assign importance to religious faith, you will be able to spare some time—to study the lives of religious scholars from a close quarter because all that glitters is not gold and what a man takes to be a spring of water from a long distance proves to be a mirage when he comes near. When you are satisfied with the truthfulness and righteousness of some religious scholar, follow him. And, then, on the Day of Judgment he will have to answer for you and you will not be held accountable.

One need not be embarrassed by differences of opinion. You make a search for truth. There will be no difficulty in its pursuit. But I will say one thing and it is that there are great misconceptions about religious scholars. Whenever the latter differ from one another, a hue and cry is raised that religious scholars always quarrel with one another But there is little truth in this. God has urged in the Holy Qur'ān that Muslims should firmly hold the rope of God and be not divided. But He has also told us that agreement and unity can come only by holding the rope of God, not in holding the rope of Satan and following the majority in all cases. Therefore,

religious scholars should also follow the lead of the majority. The rope of God is the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* (practice of the Prophet). If religious scholars differ from those who do not follow the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, then this difference of opinion is a mercy, and the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* support such difference of opinion. If a person, in an excess of religious zeal, declares that the Friday prayer should be offered in three *rak'ahs* instead of two, and most of the religious scholars support him, but two or three religious scholars oppose them saying that God and His Prophet have commanded only two *rak'ahs* to be offered, and, therefore, no addition can be made to the number of *rak'ahs*, you cannot accuse the two or three religious scholars of causing disunity among the Muslims.

Some days ago a proposal was made that prayer should be offered on the occasion of the birthday of the Holy Prophet. I have personal relations with the gentleman who made this proposal. However, I cannot but say that if the Holy Prophet himself offered such a prayer, it should be offered most necessarily, otherwise you have no right to offer this prayer and make an addition to the two annual festivals (*'Īds*) of Islam. This is an open innovation. If all the religious leaders agree on this proposal, it will not be agreement but disunity and if only one person offers resistance to this proposal it is not

disunity but unity.

Mere disagreement is no crime either under the laws of God or of man. When a plaintiff and a defendant come to a law court, they come there because of disagreement. But they do not receive punishment immediately because of their disagreement. On the other hand, an enquiry is made as to who is on the right side and who on the wrong path. If disagreement were crime, they would have been immediately punished without any inquiry into their claims. The very fact that they come to the court shows that they differ from one another. In short, the established principle is that you should follow what you consider to be right and avoid supporting the wrong Our friends are not prepared to condemn the judges and educational experts for differing from one another, but when religious scholars differ from one another, a hue and cry is raised. This propaganda is encouraged by certain vested interests. Remember that faith in religious scholars is faith in religion. It is another matter that sometime ago some religious scholars charged the representatives of the poor with blasphemy and disbelief and, by supporting the feudal lords, smashed their own prestige. They failed to understand the fact that if by such actions they destroy the prestige of the religious scholars, religion itself will lose its rightful place in society.

18

RANCOUR AND ENMITY

For the perfection of faith, an essential quality posited by the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth* is that believers should love each other purely for the sake of God. The highest grade of faith consists in loving others for the sake of God only and in being hostile to the enemies of God for God's sake only. The Holy Prophet has said: "He who loved for the sake of God and indulged in hostility for the sake of God perfected his faith."

Unfortunately, today the relations of the Muslims with one another are generally strained. Seeking the welfare of others and loving them is a rare phenomenon. Rancour, jealousy, ill-will and dishonesty in our society are widespread. Imām Bukhārī in his book *al-Adab al-Mufrad* has related the following Tradition: "The approach of the Doomsday is indicated by the fact that when the Last Day comes near, love will disappear from the hearts of men." It seems that the prediction in this Tradition is

coming true. If the atmosphere of hostility prevailing today is viewed closely, it will appear that we are standing on the threshold of the Last Day. There is an urgent need to change the atmosphere by lighting the torch of love and sincerity.

What is love and how it can be created? This is a complicated and deep problem. Its requirements and causes cannot be comprehended by human intellect. The Holy Prophet has thrown light on this when he said:

"In the world of Divine Command there are many kinds of souls. Those which are mutually acquainted there are also acquainted here. Those who do not harmonise with one another there are not familiar with one another here also."

However, the psychologists tell us that the emotion of love is born of good morals, while emotions like rancour, hatred and jealousy are born of evil-mindedness. Because Islam wants to create a relationship of love and amity among its followers and also among all mankind, it stresses good morals. Tirmidhī relates that the Prophet said: "Entry into Paradise will be mostly governed by two factors: fear of God and good morals." Ibn Mājah relates a Tradition reported by Usāmah. The Prophet was asked what was the best gift of God in favour of man. He replied: "Good morals." Goodness in morals was stressed so much that the Prophet said that the object of his

mission was to perfect morals.

The Holy Qur'ān, praising the lofty conduct of the Holy Prophet, said that he was on the highest pinnacle of goodness in morals In another place the Prophet said: "No one can enter Paradise unless he is a Muslim and he cannot be a Muslim unless he is good in morals." Further he said: "Create love and friendship among yourselves. Avoid rancour and enmity, because this shaves off This does not mean that it shaves off hair. It means that it destroys faith and religion.

19

HONEST TRADER

The general misconception about religion is that it relates only to the worship of God. Worldly matters lie outside its sphere. But the Qur'ān says that this is a false religiosity. According to the Qur'ān, Islam is not a religion in the ordinary sense of the word. It is a *dīn*, that is, a universal code of conduct. It is a system of life. It gives direction not merely about the mosque but also guides in worldly matters outside the mosque. There is no sphere of life with which it does not deal. Let us take trade. Apparently it looks as if this is pure worldliness. But the Holy Prophet said that if a trader sticks to honest dealings and is trustworthy, on the Day of Judgment he will stand in the company of the Prophets, the martyrs and those who have been declared to be truthful.

It was as a result of these Islamic teachings that many Companions of the Holy Prophet and other eminent religious men adopted trade as their profession and proved by their conduct that honest

dealing in trade is itself one of the best forms of worship. Imām Ghazālī has quoted 'Umar, the Second Caliph, as saying: "I will like to die at a place where I can buy and sell for my family." This has been explained by Ibrāhīm Adham who was asked by someone whether he liked a person who devoted himself to the worship of God or one who is honest in commercial dealings. He replied: "I think an honest trader is spiritually superior to one who devotes himself to the worship of God." When he was asked the reason for this, he said: "The trader is superior because he is always struggling against Satan. Satan wants to mislead him in commercial dealings and in weighing and measuring, but he does not surrender himself to Satan."

On the one hand, Islam stressed the excellence of honest commercial dealings and, on the other hand, it repeatedly made it clear that if you fall a prey to evils in your commercial dealings, you will face ruin both here and in the Hereafter. The Qur'ān relates the stories of the ancient nations who fell a prey to this evil and suffered annihilation. In this connection it gives the example of the Midianites who were famous in their times for their commercial activities. Although they were prosperous, most of them resorted to dishonesty in weighing and measuring. God sent the Prophet Shu'aib for reforming them. He advised them saying: "O my people ! measure and

weigh the right measure and weight; do not defraud men of their goods and do not spread disorder in the land." In other words, the Prophet Shu'aib told them clearly that if they did not desist from these practices, society would fall a prey to imbalance for lack of justice and the resulting disorder and chaos would prove a source of destruction for them.

20

IS THERE ANY GOOD IN THE WEALTH EARNED FROM USURY?

A friend of mine says that there is a verse in the chapter "Cow" of the Holy Qur'ān which says: "God effaces usury and causes charity to prosper." As Muslims, we have perfect faith in the verses of the Holy Qur'ān. But in the present times it appears that wealth earned from usury is on the increase, while the wealth spent on charity is declining. Why did God say something to the contrary?

Let us first study the translation of the verse. "*Yamḥaqū*" comes from "*Miḥq*" which means "to cause something to burn from heat" or "to efface" or "cause to decrease". When we say "*Yaumun Māḥiqun*," it means a very hot day, and "*Māḥiq al-Ṣaif*" means intensity of heat. Therefore, the first part of the verse means, as the commentators have pointed out, that God effaces usury and causes charity to prosper. Our friend had added "wealth" after "charity" which is not correct.

All of us recognise that in a society in which usury is prevalent, human sympathy and feeling of brotherhood become extinct. In a society in which people take advantage of the helplessness of others instead of helping the helpless and where the unfortunate and the distressed are fleeced, generosity and large-heartedness give place to miserliness and hard-heartedness. This is quite natural. This wealth earned from usurious dealings is patently destroying the peace and security of the world. This is the reason why Islam encourages the emotion of charity instead of usury and arouses sentiments of human sympathy. In this verse the Divine system of life has been entrusted the mission of effacing usury and causing charity to flourish. If any system, on the contrary, effaces charity and causes usury to flourish, it is a satanic system, not an Islamic one.

Another meaning of this verse is that, in the ultimate analysis, usury leads to ruin and destruction and charity leads to success and prosperity. Sometimes usurious dealings involve human beings in ruin even in this world. But the ultimate consequences appear only in the Hereafter. My friend committed a mistake in thinking that this verse refers to the worldly life, although there is nothing in this verse pointing only to the consequences of usury in this world. The Holy Qur'ān says: "Say: Impure things are not the equal of pure things." Along with this, the Qur'ān says

that, in the ultimate reckoning, impure things will be cast in Hell and destroyed. Islam does not deny the fact that in this world usurious dealings might prosper apparently. 'Abdullah b. Mas'ūd reports from the Prophet: "Usury may lead to excess (of wealth), but ultimately it involves the miscreant in clear loss." Thus spending wealth in charity may apparently lead to a small loss, but the Traditions of the Prophet show that when a man spends even a little money in the path of God with sincerity of heart, God increases his profits in the Hereafter until after his death this little money becomes like a big mountain of reward.

In the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Bukhārī there is a Tradition which says that if a man spends even a date in charity out of his lawful earnings, God takes it in His right hand and nourishes it until it becomes quite big just as you nourish a calf and it becomes a cow.

It is quite possible that a person may become rich in this world through usurious dealings, but he may be likened to a man whose body gets swollen. Those who do not know think that he is fat and healthy but those who have some knowledge of medicine know that he is nearing his end. It is also possible that a person may suffer some loss of wealth through continuously spending his wealth in charity. But he may be likened to a man who is given doses of laxatives by the physician so that all

the filth and impurity in his body may be thrown out. Apparently, it will look that he has become lean. Ignorant people who see him may express the opinion that he has become weak. But those who know better understand that he is healthier.

Therefore, it is not desirable to be unduly impressed by the growth of usurious dealings. Neither does the Qur'ān claim that this is impossible in this world. Have in view the Hereafter, where charity will lead to success and prosperity, and the wealth earned by usury will be of no profit.

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21

WEALTH AND SHAIKH 'ABD AL-QĀDIR JILĀNI

I remember that eight years ago in one of my speeches I related a miracle of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī, to which some people took objection. But as far as his miracles are concerned, even so cautious a religious scholar as Ibn Taimīyyah had to write that his miracles have reached the limit of continuous narration. This incident which I am going to relate has been narrated by Khaṭīb of Baghdad and Maulānā Thānvī has also referred to it. Once the Caliph came to the presence of the Shaikh along with his courtiers and wished to present him a purse full of gold coins. The Shaikh caught hold of the purse and pressed it whereupon drops of blood began to flow from it. Then the Shaikh said : "Do you want that I should fill my belly with the wealth amassed after fleecing the poor?" At this spectacle the Caliph fell into a condition which is beyond description. In these times it is difficult to appreciate the true worth of

this bold action in the face of the Caliph, unless it is taken into consideration that the time to which we refer was not one of meetings, processions, parties and fundamental rights. The will of a person was the law. To speak truth in those times and to write to the Caliph in every matter : "This is the command of 'Abd al-Qādir addressed to the Caliph" is beyond the understanding of those who are ready to do obeisance to authoritarian rule even in these democratic times. Such was Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī who acquired religious learning, devoted himself to the worship of God, passed his time in teaching, preached to the people, took out thousands of people from the darkness of disbelief and error, spoke the word of truth before tyrants and occupied the highest place of sainthood in the eyes of the Creator and the creatures.

Speakers and preachers generally speak of the Shaikh's miracles when talking about him. But, in my opinion, the real thing to be considered is how he reached such a high position where he could perform miracles. I think there is only one answer to this question and it is that the Shaikh had been successful in moulding himself on the Prophet's pattern. Whatever he received, he received because he followed in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet. At every turn of his life, he followed the Prophet's pattern of action and, thus, by his practice, he refuted the

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ideas of those so-called *sufis* who hold that the *Shari'ah* or the law of Islam is different from, or in conflict with, the mystic path. He himself has told that one day he was engaged in worship. "Suddenly I saw a sheet of light illumining the sky and I heard a voice saying: 'O 'Abd al-Qādir, we have rendered for you lawful whatever is unlawful.' When I heard this, I said: 'Fie upon thee, get away.' At this a voice was heard saying: 'O 'Abd al-Qādir, you are fortunate that you have escaped. I have misled seventy mystics in this way.'"

Generally people think that the saints of God have nothing to do with the world and the things of the world. They do not put on a fine dress nor eat delicious food. They grow their hairs and their clothes are tattered. They know nothing of wife and children. This idea has come to stay due to artificial mendicants who wander through the streets with a big stick in their hands having covered themselves with a single piece of cloth. But those who are in the know of things are not deceived by such artificial saints.

It is related of Shaikh 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī that he used to put on fine clothes and, while they were still quite new, he gave them to needy persons. Many travellers daily took their meals on his dining table. Heaps of wealth were lying before him, but he gave them away to the poor and the needy. His

viewpoint about wealth has been expressed in the words: "It is lawful to keep one's wealth in one's hands and in one's pocket, but it is not lawful to keep it in one's heart."

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22

PATIENCE AND *JIHĀD* (HOLY WAR)

It is a strange accident that when the Muslims were commanded to fast for the first time they had to march to the battlefield on 17 Ramaḍān, and thus occurred the battle between truth and falsehood which is known as the Battle of Badr in history. A like accident happened in the war of September 1965. Perhaps you may remember that in a trial of seventeen days we Pakistanis had won a victory and we were still in a state of war from the point of view of attaining our ideal when the month of Ramaḍān supervened. Apart from all rational arguments and other arguments based on tradition, this factual evidence itself proves that fasting and *Jihād* (holy war) are closely related so that they cannot be separated from each other. He who undertakes fasting is a warrior of faith and he who is a warrior of faith does not try to forgo the pain and labour of fasting.

A study of the Holy Qur'ān and Islamic history shows clearly that the *Sharī'ah* (law) of Islam wants

to see every Muslim play the role of a warrior, a warrior whose worship, sacrifice and life and death are exclusively meant for the pleasure of God and his life may be a standing witness to the fact that he is ready to sacrifice his own pleasure for the pleasure of God and his own will for the will of God. In the Traditions of the Prophet perfect faith has been defined as one in which man subjects his will to the will of God both in friendship and in enmity. The Holy Qur'ān has also said: "You cannot attain perfect faith unless you sacrifice in the way of God that which you love and hold dear." The Qur'ān says that God has purchased the lives and properties of the believers in return for His pleasure.

It is clear that to attain this ideal of faith, it is necessary to give up easygoing ways and adopt a life of hardship and self-discipline. Without this no one can attain the standard laid down by Islam. Islam will appeal to him to lay down his life or sacrifice his property, but he will sit idle on the plea that he has his own daily routine of habits or his own needs He will think that he cannot overcome these difficulties. Thus he will sacrifice his spiritual interests at the altar of his material requirements.

Keeping this fact in view, the Qur'ān has repeatedly stressed that Muslims should create in themselves the qualities of patience and endurance. Muftī Muḥammad 'Abduh of Egypt says that the

Qur'ān has mentioned the quality of patience seventy times, and this is a quality which can be rightly called the mother of all virtues.

If one ponders over these verses, it will become clear that, according to the *Sharī'ah* (law) of Islam, a man cannot make sacrifice unless he develops the quality of patience, and if he cannot make sacrifices, he cannot be steadfast in *Jihād* (holy war) to defeat the enemy.

23

FALSEHOOD TURNS A MAN INTO A HYPOCRITE

There is a verse in the Chapter "Ḥajj" in which God has commanded us to abstain from two things, idolatry and falsehood.

All of us know that idolatry is a great sin, but it is regrettable that we ignore the evil of falsehood, although God has mentioned it along with polytheism and has put the same emphasis on avoiding both evils. A Tradition says that once the Holy Prophet stood after the morning prayers and said three times: "False testimony has been made equal to polytheism." After this he recited the same verse of the Chapter "Ḥajj" in which stress has been laid on avoiding idolatry and falsehood.

Unfortunately, falsehood has become a second habit in our society. It has been made an essential part of commercial dealings. To win one's case in the court of law, one has to resort to falsehood and this is the keystone of our political structure. The

man who can tell the biggest lie becomes the biggest leader. But to form an idea of how much this has been disapproved by our *Shari'ah* (law) one should remember that according to Islamic *Shari'ah* perfect faith cannot go together with falsehood. The Holy Prophet was asked whether a believer could be a coward. He said: "Yes." He was asked whether the believer could be miserly. He said: "Yes" He was again asked whether a believer could be a liar. The reply of the Prophet was: "No."

Thus, it may be that a believer may fall a prey to cowardice or miserliness out of some natural weakness. But it is not possible for him to be a liar, because perfect faith cannot go together with falsehood.

Today, it has become a fashion in our society to tell lies. This is considered to be an essential part of social living. This is also a good prescription for successful life. There was a time when it was considered to be a mark of hypocrisy. The Holy Prophet has said:

"A hypocrite can be recognised by four qualities. When he is put in possession of a trust, he betrays the trust. When he talks, he tells lies. When he makes a promise, he does not fulfit it. When he quarrels with someone, he uses abusive language."

Hypocrisy is of two kinds. The first kind relates to belief. A person may not be a Muslim at heart,

but he pretends to be a Muslim, as 'Abdullah b. Ubayy was during the Prophet's time. This is the worst kind of hypocrisy and is worse than open disbelief. Such a hypocrite is not only a disbeliever, he is also guilty of deceiving God's creatures. Therefore, this is a double crime. The Qur'ān taking this in view has said: "Hypocrites will occupy the lowest position in Hell." The second kind of hypocrisy relates to moral conduct. A person is a Muslim at heart, but his practical life does in no way correspond to his claim that he is a Muslim. This is a deep contradiction between his belief and practice. His qualities are those of hypocrites. Four of these qualities have been enumerated by our Holy Prophet:

(1) Betrayal of trust.
(2) Falsehood.
(3) Violation of promise.
(4) Abusive language.

Everyone should have a look at his face in the mirror of these four qualities. If a man possesses all these four qualities, he is, according to the dictates of the Holy Prophet, practically a perfect hypocrite. If, on the other hand, someone possesses one or two of these qualities, he is partly tainted by hypocrisy.

24

BUT WHAT ARE YOU?

Thank God, Muslims have not been able as yet to forget their bright past. The other day the Day of Badr was celebrated all over the country. But let me say: "Living nations do not merely take pride in their past and celebrate 'days'. They have a look at their present in the mirror of the past and, in its light, they try to improve their future."

You say, Muslims were this and Muslims were that; they were so fearless of death; they were so brave. All this is right, but have you ever thought that these were the qualities of your ancestors, while the present-day Muslims are merely idlers who sit with their hands folded.

There was a time when three hundred thirteen Muslims were more powerful than one thousand soldiers of their enemy and today you number millions so that if you are likened to particles of dust, they can become a desert, if you are likened to drops of rain, they can constitute a river, and if you are likened

to bricks, they can build a new wall of China.

But, in spite of your large numbers, you are suffering defeats everywhere, you are being driven from your homes and you are like straws which the wind takes away in whichever direction it blows. How did this situation come about? What are the causes underlying it? I do not want to go into details. Briefly, I may say that the situation arose when you forgot to sacrifice your lives in the way of God. As a result the world denied you the right to live. Today we have become oblivious of the duty of *Jihād* (holy war). Worldliness overwhelms us. We measure everything in terms of profit and loss, although the existence of a Muslim cannot be conceived without *Jihād* and the Holy Prophet has said: "If a Muslim dies in such a state that he neither participated in *Jihād* nor desired to participate in it, he dies the death of a hypocrite."

For us, the worship of God consists in bowing and prostrating, but, according to God and His Prophet, it consists in fighting for the cause of God.

There is a Tradition of the Prophet which says that keeping watch for one night in the way of God is better than the worship of a thousand nights. In another place, he said: "Hell-Fire will not touch two eyes, one which wept for the fear of God and the other which passed the night in keeping watch in the cause of God. According to a Tradition related

in Bukhārī, the Prophet said: "Hell-Fire does not touch a servant of God whose feet become dusty in the way of God." This has been further explained in another Tradition which says: "The smoke of Hell-Fire and the dust of the way of God cannot go together into the nose of a Muslim." All this reward is not merely for the virtuous. If a corrupt and sinful man sincerely fights in the way of God, He forgives all his past sins and blesses him with His pleasure. Baihaqī reports:

"Once the Prophet began to pray over the funeral of a man. 'Umar told him that the man was sinful and corrupt. Therefore, he should not say his prayer. The Prophet asked the people: Have you seen him doing something Islamic Some people said: He kept watch for one night in the way of God. The Prophet offered his funeral prayer, levelled the earth and said: Your companions say that you will go to Hell, but I bear witness that you will go to Paradise."

25

MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The highest desire of a man in full possession of his consciousness is that he may successfully go through the trial of life and when he comes in the presence of God, he may earn His pleasure. In this connection, Islam has taught its followers that their success depends on how far they care for others side by side with caring for themselves. It has cut at the root of human selfishness by stating the purpose of the Muslim community in these words: "You are the best nation taken out for humanity. You command the good and prevent others from doing evil." According to this verse of the Holy Qur'ān, it is incumbent on all individuals of the Muslim community that they care not only for their own success and salvation but also for the success and salvation of the entire humanity. What is the relation of Muslims among themselves has been made clear in another verse which says: "Believing men and believing women are each other's friends and helpers."

The Holy Prophet in his Traditions has laid it down as a necessary condition for the perfection of faith that a Muslim should like for others what he likes for himself and he should dislike for others what he dislikes for himself. History bears witness that so long as Muslims constituted themselves into an argument of God, they set up milestones on the way to mutual responsibilities which will always illumine the path of humanity. Not to speak of normal circumstances, even in the struggle of life and death they preferred others to themselves. In this connection I shall relate a famous incident. It is regrettable that some people have attributed it to World War II also, although it is an incident relating to the sacrifice made by those who were fighting in the way of God in a holy war. A warrior of God was lying wounded in the field of battle. He is crying: "Water, water, water!" When water was brought to him, another voice is heard crying: "Water, water, water!" The first wounded man says: "First give the water to him." When water is brought to him, another voice is heard crying for water. The second wounded forgets himself and desires that water be given to the third man. But when water is brought to him, it is found that he is dead. When it is brought to the second man, he also breathes his last and lastly when water is brought to the first warrior of faith, it is found that he too has expired.

Such were the sacrifices made by early Muslims for one another. A man is dying of thirst, but he does not like to prefer his own thirst over the thirst of another brother Muslim.

This is not all. The Prophet of Cod has told us that believers will make sacrifices for each other on the Judgment Day also and this sacrifice will so please God that He will bless the man who makes the sacrifice with His highest pleasure. The Prophet has, in this connection, related a story of the Judgment Day. He said: The works of a believer will be weighed and it will be found that his virtues and vices balance each other. If one virtue is added to his list of virtues, his virtues will outweigh his vices. Therefore, he will go to his parents, relations and friends in search of one virtue. But they will have nothing to spare for him. In this state of disappointment he will come across a sinful believer. He will ask him why he is wandering about. In reply he will tell him the whole story. The sinful believer will say: I will give you one virtue. Then God will call him and ask him why he gave away his virtue to another person. In reply he will say: My register of deeds was completely devoid of all virtues except one. I thought this one virtue will be of no use to me. If I give it to a brother of mine, it will contribute to his success and salvation. The Prophet said: God was so much pleased with this

reply that He forgave the sins of both believers.

Leaving the believers, even the non-Muslim nations who gain success and prosperity in this world owe their achievements to the spirit of self-sacrifice. They have passion for sacrificing their own interests for the sake of their countrymen. They themselves gladly bear losses, but they cannot tolerate the losses to which their own nation is exposed. They prefer the interests of their countrymen to their personal interests. This British nation which had ruled for so many years on the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent and in whose empire the sun never set did not attain its power by mere accident. The rise and fall of nations is governed by a Divine law and nations rise and fall according to that law. You may abuse the British as much as you like, but the fact remains that the British character was marked by some traits which gave them their strength and their flag fluttered from the East to the West. Among these traits was the spirit of sacrifice displayed by the British. The British knew how to make sacrifices for their nation.

The advent of the British in India also owed much to this spirit of sacrifice. In 1716 a deputation of the British living in Calcutta approached the Emperor Farrukh Seir to make a complaint about the Nawab of Bengal. By chance Farrukh Seir, the Mughal Emperor, was sick at that time. The efforts

of the doctors to cure him had failed. In the deputation of the British there was also a doctor, Hamilton. He sought permission to treat the Emperor and the latter was completely cured by Hamilton's treatment. The Emperor was so pleased that he wanted to give a rich reward to Hamilton. If the doctor had been one of us, he would have enriched himself without caring for his own people. But Hamilton belonged to a living nation. What he asked of the Emperor reveals the secret of the greatness of the British. The British doctor said: If you want to reward me, exempt the British in Bengal from all excise taxes and other taxes and give possession to the British of those villages which adjoin the British population in Calcutta.

Students of history know that this incident laid the foundation of the British rule in India. A British doctor sacrificed his own interests for the betterment of his nation and this marked the beginning of British strength in India.

26

RIGHTS OF NON-MUSLIMS

The enemies of Islam have often preferred the accusation against Islam that in the Islamic State or in a State based on the religion of Islam, the non-Muslims meet with severe maltreatment and, leaving the Muslims, other sections of the people are not treated well. Society gives them a low position and under various pretexts tries to deal with them harshly.

This is such a big lie that it should not be necessary to refute it before the Muslims. But the falsehood has been repeated so often and so loudly that unfortunately modern educated Muslims have also been influenced by this propaganda. Therefore, I shall make a few comments.

The non-Muslims who live in an Islamic State are called *Ahl al-Dhimmah* or *Dhimmī* in the terminology of *Fiqh*. *Dhimmī* is not a word of reprobation. This means that these are the people whose lives, honour and property are the responsibility of the Muslim State. To protect them the Islamic State levies a kind

of military tax on them which is called *Jizyah*.

Many stories have been invented about *Jizyah* and is said that *Jizyah* is the antithesis of civilisation and conflicts with the principles of humanity. But I say that at least the modern progressive world should feel ashamed to level such accusation since it does not exempt from taxation even the necessaries of life like water, light and house until even a tax is levied on the birth of children. Those governments which resort to such taxation have no right to object to the Islamic tax of *Jizyah*, which was levied to protect the life, honour and property of the non-Muslims. If you make an enquiry into the matter, you will find that during the time of the Early Caliphs, the rich were taxed at the rate of one rupee per month, the middle classes were taxed at the rate of half a rupee per month and the poor at the rate of a quarter of a rupee per month. Women, children, the old, the crippled and the extremely poor people were exempted from the tax. The Islamic government also guaranteed that if a non-Muslim lost his earning capacity due to old age or if he became paralysed, he would be given a pension from the public treasury.

Take an example. 'Umar, the Second Caliph, was going about one night when he saw a non Muslim old man begging for alms. On 'Umar's asking him why he was begging, he said: Because I do not have the strength to earn a living. Hearing this 'Umar said:

'Umar should blame himself that during the youth of this old man he exacted *Jizyah* from him, but when he became old he left him to himself. 'Umar then ordered that he should be given a pension from the public treasury. The Muslims collected *Jizyah* of course, but an idea of how they carried out the responsibility of protecting the non-Muslims can be formed from the fact that if at any stage they felt that they could not protect the non-Muslims, they did not desist from refunding to the non-Muslims the amount collected from them. During the time of 'Umar, the Muslims conquered a city. But afterwards they had to give up possession of the city. Therefore, the commander of the Muslims called upon non-Muslims of the city and paid them back the entire amount collected from them This is the reason why history preserves the record of many incidents wherein the non-Muslims, when they found that the Muslims were giving up the possession of a city, requested the commander of the Muslims not to leave them at the mercy of their former rulers.

It is my considered assertion that no other government in the whole world can furnish a parallel to the toleration and large-heartedness with which the Muslim governments treated the non-Muslims. It made no distinction between a Muslim and a non-Muslim. If a Muslim kills a non-Muslim, according to Ḥanafī jurisprudence, the murderer will be killed in

retaliation. The Prophet of Islam declared that the killing of a non-Muslim is such a heineous sin that the murderer of a non-Muslim will not enjoy the sweet smell of Paradise (Bukhārī).

Life is, after all, a very valuable thing. But Islam proceeds further and prohibits the Muslims from harming the wine, the cross or the pork of a non-Muslim. *Fatāwā-i-'Ālamgīrī* is a famous book of Ḥanafī jurisprudence. In one of its chapters entitled *al-Ghasb*, it lays down that if a Muslim causes the wine of a non-Muslim to go to waste, he will have to pay its price.

In *Hidāyah* in the chapter *al-Ghasb*, it is said that if a Muslim breaks the cross of a non-Muslim he will have to pay an amount equal to its price.

Of course as regards wine, pork and cross, the restriction has been laid down that these things will not be brought to or used in an assembly of the Muslims. 'Umar made a treaty with non-Muslims in which the conditions were laid down: They will not raise the cross in an assembly of the Muslims nor will they take a pig in the residential areas of the Muslims.

When an invading army enters a city, it does not desist from any atrocity. Every luxury becomes lawful and every looting becomes legitimate for it. It can ruin any garden, it can raze down any house There is no one to prevent it. But how sensitive were the

Muslim invaders in respect of the property of non-Muslims can be gathered by the following story told by the Grand Muftī of Palestine in a conference of the Rābiṭah-i-'Ālam-i-Islāmī: "Muslims were besieging Jerusalem. A person came running and bewildered to the commander of the army, 'Ubaidah b. al-Jarrāḥ. He said: Muslims have perished. 'Ubaidah asked him: How? He said: Muslim soldiers entered a garden of grapes owned by a non-Muslim. On hearing this, Abū 'Ubaidah ran barefooted to the garden of grapes and stopped the soldiers from eating grapes. He called the owner of the garden and paid him the price of grapes. After paying the price, he gave the grapes as a gift to the Muslims in general."

This is the teaching of Islam and the practice of the Muslims in regard to non-Muslims. I thank God that the same generous treatment is being meted out to the non-Muslims in Pakistan. In our neighbouring country, India, Muslims are suffering all kinds of hardships. Anti-Muslim feeling in India is so high that since Partition five hundred anti-Muslim riots have taken place there. But we are proud of the fact that Pakistan is free from these regrettable events and, God willing, will remain free in future.

27

CAN THE REPENTANCE OF A MURDERER BE ACCEPTED ?

For sometime past the newspapers are publishing reports of murders in such rapid succession that one feels amazed. These events provoke us to think about the underlying causes, and the result that we arrive at is that we have lost the high moral and religious sensitivity which characterised the early Muslims. The history of Arabia at the advent of Islam shows that the Arabs were guilty of such murderous actions due to their ignorance. Killing people was a routine matter with them The sword was unsheathed on ordinary matters. The Prophet of Islam came to the world to end this state of affairs. If we compare this period of insecurity among the Arabs before Islam with our own social conditions, we will find very little difference. The fact is that human blood is being shed today like water. I will go further and say that blood has become cheaper than water. Hard-heartedness has reached such limits that

in Lahore three young men come to a poor fruit-seller and begin to quarrel with him on the price of oranges after eating them. The fruit-seller insists on his just price, but the young men are adamant on giving less. At last the fruit-seller, instead of being given his price, is shot dead.

Just think how cheap is human life. The unfortunate fruit-seller's children became orphans merely because he was demanding his right. If you go to purchase Coca-Cola, you will have to pay at least fifty or sixty pice, but a Muslim's life was not considered equal to that amount. How can you expect this society and people with such standards of thinking to change the map of the world or to rule over the destinies of other people ? This is mere childish thinking.

An idea of the punishment prescribed by the Qur'ān for the murder of a Muslim can be gathered from the following verse of the Holy Qur'ān : "He who kills a believer knowingly, his place is in Hell, where he will abide for ever. The wrath of God and His curse is upon such a miscreant and He has prepared for him a grievous punishment."

In the Holy Qur'ān such heavy punishments are not prescribed for any crime except that of disbelief and polytheism. The thought of even one such punishment is heart-shaking. To say that such a person will go to Hell is enough for a believing Muslim.

But to this has been added the threat that he will abide there for ever, that the wrath and curse of God will be upon him and that he will be denied the mercy of God. Who is capable of facing the wrath of God and who is more unfortunate than he who is cursed by God ? As if this is not enough, God will not only be displeased with him, He will prepare for him a grievous punishment such as is difficult for any human being to conceive.

In connection with this verse, there has been much discussion on the subject whether a murderer's repentance can be accepted. 'Abdullah b. 'Abbās, who is the first commentator of the Qur'ān, holds the view that the murderer's repentance can be accepted. A story is related in this connection that one day he was teaching the Qur'ān to an assembly of people. Someone put him the question whether a murderer's repentance can be accepted. He said : "No." The questioner thereupon left the assembly. People told 'Abdullah b. 'Abbās that he held the view that a murderer's repentance can be accepted. "But you gave him a different reply." 'Abdullah b. 'Abbās said : "I felt that the questioner had the intention of murdering someone. Therefore, I gave him a different reply." After enquiry it was found that the questioner really intended to murder someone and therefore asked 'Abdullah b. 'Abbās the question.

The famous *Tābi'ī* (follower of the Companions) Sufyān says that the verdict relating to the non-acceptance of the murderer's repentance relates to the time before the murder has been committed, so that the prospective murder may, out of fear, give up his intention. But if the murder has been committed, acceptability of repentance should be stressed, because if the murderer is convinced that his repentance will not be accepted, he may commit further murders.

In a Tradition the Prophet is reported to have said that murdering a Muslim is tantamount to murdering the whole humanity. This does not mean that killing the entire humanity is as ordinary a thing as a single murder. What it means is that if a single Muslim is murdered, his murderer is as the murderer of the whole world.

According to 'Abdullah b. Mas'ūd, the Holy Prophet said : To revile a Muslim is sin and to fight him is disbelief. The Muslims have also been told that if a Muslim bears arms against another Muslim, the former has nothing to do with Islam. According to a Tradition of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* : "He who bears arms against us (Muslims) is not one of us." And this relates to the murder of a Muslim. Life, according to Islam, is so sacred that the killing of a disbeliever or a polytheist or one with whom there is an agreement has been declared to be a dreadful

crime. According to *Ṣaḥīḥ*, of Bukhārī : "He who kills somone who has entered into an agreement with the Muslims will not enjoy the sweet smell of Paradise, although its smell comes to a man from a distance of forty miles."

28

QUALITIES OF BELIEVERS

In the Holy Qur'ān, the believers have been described in these terms: "Those who spend their money in favourable as well as unfavourable circumstances and control their anger and forgive people. And Allah befriends those who do good to others" (iii. 134).

In this verse the pious Muslims have been said to possess four qualities. The first quality is that they spend their wealth in the way of Allah under all circumstances. If they are rich and prosperous, they do not desist from spending in the way of Allah by indulging in luxurious life and, if they are poor, their poverty does not prevent them from spending in Allah's way according to their capacity.

Their second quality is that they control their anger. The Qur'ān does not say that they are never angry. What it says is that when they are angry, they control their anger. In this connection a Tradition of the Holy Prophet is well worth remembering. He

said: "The true wrestler is not one who defeats his adversary in wrestling. The real wrestler is one who succeeds in controlling his anger."

Control of anger is a negative quality. The Qur'ān has gone further and described two positive qualities of *Taqwā* (piety). It says that they do not merely control their anger, but if someone commits some excess against them, they forgive him. They even go further and do good to such a person.

It is related of Imām Zain al-'Ābidīn that once a slave-girl was helping him in making his ablution. Suddenly the jug of water slipped from her hand and fell on the Imām. The Imām looked at her angrily whereupon she repeated the Qur'ānic words: "And they control their anger." The Imām's anger disappeared. She again said: "And they forgive people." The Imām thereupon forgave her. Then she said: "And God loves those who do good." The Imām said: "Go, I grant you freedom"

These are some of the qualities of the pious. Let us pray to God that we may be able to cultivate these virtues.

29

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE TERMS "MAULĀNĀ" AND "MAULVI"

A friend from Karachi has asked an interesting question. He writes:

"Is it lawful to use the term *Maulānā* for a religious scholar? What is the difference between the meanings of *Maulānā* and *Rabbanā*? Do both terms bear the same meaning? I think that *Maulānā* means our master or our lord. But such terms can be used only for God. Kindly explain since when the term came into vogue. If possible please also throw some light on the terms *Maulvī* and *Mullā*."

The opinion of our friend that *Maulānā* and *Rabbanā* mean the same thing is not based on facts. Although in the Arabic language, *Rabb* (Lord) is used also in a metaphorical sense, generally the term is exclusively set apart for God. On the other hand, the word *Maulānā* has a wider meaning. It means supporter, friend, a freed slave, a master who has freed a slave, kinsman, neighbour and brother. In the beginning this term was used for nobles, officials and religious

scholars, but gradually it came to be exclusively used for religious scholars. History shows that this word was used for the first time by a Companion of the Holy Prophet, Anas b. Mālik, for Ḥasan of Baṣrah.

According to *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Sā'd (VII, 128), Anas b. Mālik was asked a question. He said: "Go to Maulānā Ḥasan." They said: "Abū Ḥamzah, we address a question to you and you ask us to go to Maulānā Ḥasan?" Anas said: "We have heard Traditions and Ḥasan has also heard them. But the difference is that Ḥasan has preserved them, while we have forgotten."

Besides religious scholars, this term was also used in the third and fourth centuries of Hijrah for nobles and high officers. In his "History," Ibn Khallikān (II, 2) has recorded the following sentence of Abu'l-Faḍl for the ruler of Egypt: "May God preserve the good fortune of our *Maulānā* (our chief)!"

As far as the words *Maulvī* and *Mullā* are concerned, it is unfortunate that in our present society the word *Maulvī* is used in a derogatory sense. But there was a time when this was a title which denoted respect and greatness. According to the author of *Ghiyāth al-Lughāt*, the word *Maulvī* is related to *Maulā* which means master and God. *Maulvī*, therefore, means one who is faithful to God. In the beginning this term was used for rulers and big officers.

When the ruler of Egypt, Muḥammad, appointed Abū al-Mandā' as the Governor of Syria, he used the title of *Maulvī* for him. Such a great scholar as Maulānā of Rūm takes pride in calling himself *Maulvī*.

After *Maulvī*, let us come to the meaning of the term *Mullā*. Literally, it means "full of". In the Holy Qur'ān wherever its derivatives have been used, they mean the same thing. Therefore, *Mullā* means one whose breast is full of knowledge and this is the reason why in Islamic history some eminent scholars have been called *Mullās*. The author of *Kashf al-Ẓunūn* has used this term for Sunnī scholars like Shaikh 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, Maḥmūd of Jaunpūr, 'Abd al-Ḥakīm of Sialkot and 'Allāmah 'Alī al-Qārī as a mark of respect. Similarly, among the Kāshānī Shī'ah scholars, Mullā Ḥasan Faiḍī and Mullā Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī are famous. It is regrettable that our standards and values have changed, and the term which was used by our ancestors for showing respect and honour is now a term of abuse. Terms of respect like *Janāb* and *Ṣāḥib* are not now used for persons whose efforts have kept the torch of Islam burning in the most adverse circumstances, who preached to us the word of God by sitting on mattresses, eating dry bread and filling the jails of the British. On the one side, we treat our religious scholars in this derogatory way, on the other side

inferiority complex and slavish mentality has so taken hold of our minds that we are not tired of calling the Christian priests as fathers.

Perhaps this is due to the fact that these "fathers" belong to a nation which enslaved us on the point of the sword and the wounds inflicted by it are still causing the Islamic community to bleed profusely.

30

HIGH POSITION OF THE PEOPLE OF PARADISE

Literally *Jannat* means a garden whose shade is very thick and the branches of whose trees cross each other, a garden whose trees are so plentiful that they cover the whole earth. The Holy Qur'ān has used the term *Jannat* for the gardens of this earth also.

What is the real nature of the Paradise which God has reserved for the believers? In this material life we cannot conceive of it. However, to give some idea of its nature, the Holy Qur'ān has mentioned it in various places and said that rivers will flow in it, it will contain beautiful but chaste wives, it will be full of pretty palaces and there will be many kinds of fruits and other tasteful things in it. These things are found even in this world, but the Traditions of the Holy Prophet indicate that those of this world bear no relation to the things of Paradise. There is a Tradition reported by 'Abdullah b.

'Abbās mentioned in many commentaries of the Holy Qur'ān which says: "There is *Jannat* in this world only in name."

But one is surprised when one finds by the side of this Tradition many conjectures about Paradise, its trees and fruits. After believing in God and His Prophet, a believer is ready to believe in anything mentioned by the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth*, however irrational it may appear to be, but no other authority has the right to turn Islam into a religion of wonders merely by indulging in conjectures. In Paradise all the physical and spiritual pleasures will be present. The people of Paradise will enjoy the supreme bliss of having a vision of the Divine Being. According to a verse of the Holy Qur'ān: "In this Paradise, there is everything for you which you desire and also that which you ask for."

After this brief tenet there is no room for further suggestions on this subject such that in Paradise every fruit will be as big as a large pot of water. The commentator, Ibn Jarīr, has collected many Traditions in this connection which are based neither on the Qur'ān nor on any statement of the Holy Prophet, but merely represent the mental fertility of the ancients and which are open to rational criticism. For example, the following Tradition:

"The trees of Paradise will all be alike from the root to the branches and its fruits will be as big as

large pots of water. Whenever any fruit is plucked from any tree, another fruit will take its place and in Paradise water will flow without any channels" (al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, I, 384).

Whatever has been said in the commentary of Ṭabarī about Paradise will be accepted by us as true, provided some authority is quoted. When and where did the Holy Prophet say these things? What collection of authentic *Ḥadīth* contains these descriptions? If no authority is referred to and all these are the ideas of certain reporters, we should be pardoned for saying that no such support is needed for describing the beauty of Paradise. This is Divine beauty, and needs no such description. What more can be said in praise of Paradise than that it is a stage in the evolution of humanity where creatureliness touches the fringe of the Creator. The creatures become God-like. Even the angels seek permission for approaching them. Their power and greatness are such that if they say *Kun* (Be), the non-existent becomes existent. Shaikh Ibn 'Arabī says in his book *Futūḥāt*:

"When an angel of God will come to the people of Paradise, he will first seek their permission. On reaching them, he will deliver them a letter from God addressed to the people of Paradise. In this letter it will be written after salutations that this letter is from God Who will never die to those who have been made eternal and will never die. Know

that when I say *Kun* (Be) to something, it comes to be. Now I confer this gift on you that when you say *Kun* (Be) to something, it will come into existence."

After referring to this Tradition, Shaikh Ibn 'Arabī says that after quoting the above passages from this letter, the Holy Prophet said that after the people of Paradise have received this letter, whoever among them says *Kun* to something, it will unfailingly come into existence.

31

PRAISE OF GOD AND THANKFULNESS TO HIM

Islam has laid down different phrases to express one's emotions and feelings on suitable occasions. For example in order to praise someone you would say *Subḥān Allāh* (Blessed be Allah) and *Māshā' Allāh* (What God wills). Similarly, Muslims have been directed to say *Bismillāh* (In the name of God) when commencing some work. When one sneezes, one should say *al-Ḥamdu Lillāh* (Praise be to God), while one who hears this phrase should say in reply *Yarḥamukallāh* (May God have mercy on you). If someone dies, you should say *Innā Lillāh wa innā ilaih Rāj'ūn* (We are from God, and we shall return to Him) If someone is hearing something which he does not like or see someone doing something wrong he should say *Nau'dh Billāh* (We seek refuge in God) or *Lā ḥaula wa lā quwwata illā Billāh* (There is no power except that of God) These phrases laid down by Islam are very brief, but in their import and

meaning they are as broad as the heavens and the earth. The Holy Prophet has said that the reward given on uttering these phrases is so rich as to be enough to fill the heavens and the earth.

These phrases show that it is not difficult to acquire virtues, but there are very few who seek them. God is ready to give His reward even today, but there is no one to take it from Him. He has taught us in the opening chapter of the Qur'ān how to ask of God, and we repeat it in every prayer. "Praise be to God, the Lord of all the worlds" is a phrase of immense greatness and it is so rich in meaning. If someone repeats it, he will receive immeasurable reward. The fact is that no idea can be formed of this reward. It should be taken into consideration that the first to utter this phrase *al-Ḥamdu Lillāh* (Praise be to God) was the first man, Adam, and the Qur'ān says that when the world will come to its end this will be the pet phrase of the people of Paradise. This phrase lies at the beginning of humanity and at its end. The world began with this phrase. It has been stated in regard to this phrase that he who utters it with his tongue will be given a reward by God of which no idea can be formed. God says that when a believer says "Praise be to God" after receiving some blessing from God, God says: "See how I gave him a small blessing but, in response to this blessing, he uttered *al-Ḥamdu Lillāh*

(Praise be to God) which is a thing on which no price can be set.

The meaning of this is that the phrase "Praise to God" denotes infinity. When a creature utters this phrase what he means is that, in the beginning of time when nothing existed, only God deserved to be praised, and when everything will become non-existent, even then God alone will deserve praise. God alone is the recipient of the praises uttered by the Prophets, the angels, the saints and other creatures. This praise is infinite and will never come to an end. It exists from the beginning and will always exist. In comparison the blessings of God are finite. It is a rule of mathematics that if you subtract the finite from the infinite the remainder will be infinite.

The tongue with which man utters the praise of God is given him by God But His kindness lies in that He says that the creature is uttering His praise. There are three words in Arabic, *ḥamd* (praise), *madḥ* (praise) and *shukr* (thankfulness). All the three words differ in their meaning. According to experts, no language in the world is so perfect and easy as the Arabic language. It has, however, been made so difficult that people are afraid to go near it, although it is more scientific and easy than any other language. The language which has been chosen by God to reveal His Word must contain some merit, which is not found in other languages. This is also

the language of His Last Prophet. This will also be the language of the people of Paradise. It is clear that such a living language must possess certain charateristics which mark it off from other languages. One such characteristic is its brevity which is unexampled. No other language can rival it in edoquence. Take, for example, the three words *madḥ* (praise), *ḥamd* (praise) and *shukr* (thankfulness). Apparently, these words carry the same sense, but in reality they differ greatly in their meaning. The lexicographists have entered into minute discussions about the meaning of these words. We shall not go into details here. As an example, we may say that *madḥ* (praise) is applied to both animate and inanimate objects ; *ḥamd* (praise) is reserved for animate objects, whether one receives or does not receive a reward ; *shukr* (thankfulness) comes after one receives a reward. Therefore, *al-Ḥamdu Lillāh* (Prise be to God) is superior to *ash-Shukr Lillāh* (Thanks be to God), because *ḥamd* denotes both praise and thankfulness, while *shukr* means only thankfulness. But as far as *ḥamd* (praise) is concerned, man cannot fully praise God If he passes his whole life in thanking God for His blessings, he still cannot thank Him for His blessings. The Holy Qur'ān says that if you try to enumerate the blessings of God, you cannot enumerate them and, when we cannot enumerate them, how can we adequately thank

Him? Shaikh Sa'dī says :

"Even if a man thanks God with every breath of his life, still he cannot thank Him adequately, because every breath includes two blessings. One is that because of breathing man lives, the other is that because of breathing man receives comfort. If his breath stops for a while, he feels uneasy."

32

DON'T TRY TO BE A DIVINE WORKER

In the Chapter on "Cattle" the Holy Qur'ān says :

"Thus We have embellished the works of every people in their sight. Then they will have to return to their Lord when He will tell them what they have done" (vi. 188).

In the following verse of the Chapter "Jonah," God says :

"If it had been thy Lord's Will, they would all have believed, all who are on earth. Will thou then compel mankind against their will to believe?" (x. 99).

God says :

"Your duty is to preach Islam. Whether a person believes or not, it is his personal affair.

"Therefore, do thou give them admonition, for thou art one to admonish Thou art not one to manage (men's) affairs" (lxxxviii. 21).

The Qur'ān also accepts that this is also the right of other religions. Their followers are responsible for

their own beliefs and works. They have every right to preach their religion with all the arguments at their command. But they also cannot use compulsion in matters of religion.

In the Chapter on *Shūra* (Consultation), God says addressing the followers of other religions:

"God is our Lord and your Lord. For us is the responsibility of our deeds and for you for your deeds. There is no contention between us and you. God will bring us together and to Him is our final goal" (xlii. 15).

It is the duty of the Muslims to do good to all non-Muslims excepting those who are at war with the m. God says:

"God forbids you not with regard to those who fight you not for (your) faith, nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them, for God loveth those who are just. God only forbids you with regard to those who fight you for (your) faith and drive you out of your homes and support others in driving you out, from turning to them for friendship and protection. It is such as turn to them in such circumstances that do wrong" (lx. 89).

33

THERE IS NOTHING WHICH IS NOT WITH GOD

God says in the Qur'ān:

"Verily, God has purchased the lives and properties of the believers in exchange for Paradise They fight in the way of God Sometimes they kill the unbelievers and sometimes they are themselves slain."

The first thing to be considered in this verse relates to purchase and sale. God is purchasing something from the believers, and it is their life and property. But the thing to be seen here is that a man can sell something which essentially belongs to him. If this life and this property were our own, we could lay claim to them and we could also sell them. But the fact is that both these things belong to God. They have been entrusted to us by God. He brought us into existence from non-existence. All things which we own have been given by Him. This is His gift. Even then He says that He has purchased their

lives. In this way the first good which God did to a believer is that He gave in his ownership something which did not belong to him. Then He purchased His own gift from the believer. He could have taken away these things from us and that too without giving anything in return, and we could hardly make any complaint to Him. The time we spent in making use of His gifts was also due to His kindness. How wonderful it is that at first he transferred something into our ownership and then purchased it from us in exchange for a reward. Here another matter deserves consideration. It is that the reward for something limited is also limited, and the reward for something unlimited is unlimited. The price of a thing is always fixed according to its value. Our life is limited. One day it will come to an end This means that it is mortal. Its just price should also be limited. Like life property is also limited and liable to perish. It is bound to deteriorate. God purchased these limited things but gave for them a reward which is unlimited. The reward for giving one's life and property takes the shape of Paradise which is imperishable and whose blessings are unlimited. God gave an unlimited reward in exchange for something which was limited. This talk of limited and unlimited reminds us of the saying of some savant who says:

"In this world which is limited man should only

fulfil his needs and not his desires. Human needs are limited which can be fulfilled by wearing coarse clothes and eating dry bread Therefore these needs can be met in the world which is itself limited. But desire is unlimited. This means that every moment a fresh need crops up Needs can be fulfilled, but not desires. One desire gives rise to another. Therefore this unlimited thing can be fulfilled only in a place which itself is unlimited. It is clear that only Paradise is such a place and not this world."

This means that in this world which is limited you should seek only to fulfil your needs and leave your desires for the next world which is eternal.

This was a digression. I was saying that God says: "He purchases the lives and properties of the believers." Here another matter comes up for consideration One purchases only that thing which one does not possess. If someone has a thing in abundance, he has no need to purchase it. Life and property are the gifts of God. God, the Eternal, does not need them. Let us think what we can give God Who is the Master of the worlds. Is He short of something of which He can become a customer? Yes! Although He has created the worlds, and does not stand in need of anything, yet He is short of one thing. Give close consideration to what I am saying, lest I be accused of blasphemy. Can this thing be reason? No! He has no need for reason. Human reason is a gift of God. This is not the thing which

God will purchase on the Day of Judgment. If it is not reason, is it beauty which He needs? No! God has no need for mortal beauty for He Himself is Eternal Beauty. Then, what is the thing which we can present Him as a gift and which He lacks? This thing is the humility of man. God is free from humility He is free of all defects. He is the Master and the Ruler He has no need for humility. Humility is a quality of His creatures. Man must not approach God with a feeling of pride. God says: "Pride is My sheet. He who wants to take away this sheet from Me desires to make war against Me."

Therefore, do not try to be masters and rulers. Do not think that you are the lords and sustainers of men. Do not think that you can degrade human beings as you like. Do not think that you are the shepherd and others are your herd. When you go in the presence of God, go to Him as servants, slaves and humble creatures. This is not an occasion for pride He who bows down here occupies a high place with God. He who is insolent and proud is sure to be abased.

34

HOW DID ISLAM SPREAD?

It is a historical fact that the period of peace was more helpful in the propagation and progress of Islam than the period of war. When the treaty of Ḥudaibiyah was made between the Muslims and the disbelievers, there were only fourteen hundred men with the Holy Prophet. The two years of the peace of Ḥudaibiyah proved to be the two years of the porgress of Islam. When the different tribes of Arabia, under this treaty, got an opportunity to come into contact with Muslims without let or hindrance and they began to visit Medina, their misunderstandings were gradually removed and they began to embrace Islam in large numbers Not only Muslims but also non-Muslims accept the fact that the atmosphere of peace created by the treaty of Ḥudaibiyah made this treaty a prelude to the victory of Mecca. Commenting on the treaty of Ḥudaibiyah the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says that the treaty of Ḥudaibiyah gave a breathing space to the two parties

and its advantage went totally to the Holy Prophet. This treaty lasted for two years and was the cause of the repeated failures of the Meccan. The condition according to which Muslims promised to return Meccan converts to Mecca and which looked to be to the advantage of the Quraish proved harmful to them against all their expectations and at last they themselves requested the Muslims to change it. In real fact the victory of Mecca was itself a result of the peace of Ḥudaibiyah which paved the way for this victory Two years before this, only fourteen hurdred Muslims had come out with the Prophet to perform *'Umrah*. This time the world saw the spectacle of "ten thousand saints" (in the words of the Bible) accompanying him and the majority of these were new converts who had embraced Islam in the interim period.

It is possible that someone may think that this example of the spread of Islam in a peaceful atmosphere relates only to the treaty of Ḥudaibiyah. But we see that in the entire history of the Muslims wherever the atmosphere was peaceful and there was no political impediment in the way of preaching of Islam, Islam was able to gain acceptance. The reason is that Islam is a true religion and there are only two ways of preaching Islam. God says: "Call people towards the path of your Lord with wisdom and good advice."

It is clear that the path of wisdom and good advice is the path of exemplary conduct, not the path of the sword. This is the reason why Islam has triumphed over other religions through appeal to argument and reason.

It is, of course, true that Muslim governments had also to fight wars and the Muslims fought against others as well as among themselves. Who does not know that in governmental affairs, this is not something abnormal. The fact remains, however, that, as far as Islam as a religion is concerned, a peaceful atmosphere has suited it more than a state of war For example, take Indonesia where no Muslim invader ever set his foot, but today the large majority of a hundred millions are the followers of Islam by God's grace.

35

IS DEATH THE PUNISHMENT OF APOSTASY?

Mr Aḥmad Salīm writes from Rawalpindi:

"Sometime ago with reference to you a pro-Jamā'at-i-Islāmī newspaper wrote that the punishment for apostasy is not death As far as we have come to know, all the religious scholars hold the view that the punishment for apostasy is death. Will you kindly take the trouble to throw some light on the commands of God and His Prophet on this subject?"

I will first tell Mr Aḥmad Salīm that for ascertaining our viewpoint, he should not rely on the pro-Jamā'at-i-Islāmī newspapers. Their leader has passed a verdict that one can tell lies in case of urgent necessity and these newspapers follow the verdict of their leader most often as far as we are concerned.

After this necessary elucidation, I will now say something on the subject under discussion.

"The punishment for apostasy is death." This sentence has become very famous, but the fact is that Islam has prescribed far more dire punishments

in this world for the apostate. The Holy Qur'ān says:

> "If any one of you turns his back on the religion of Islam and dies in a state of disbelief, such are the people whose works will be wasted in this world and in the Hereafter and these are people of Hell where they will live for ever" (Chapter on "Cow").

In this verse it has been said that the works of an apostate shall be wasted both here and in the Hereafter. It is quite understandable that the apostate's works will be wasted in the Hereafter, but what merits consideration is how they will be wasted in this world.

The commentators of the Holy Qur'ān have discussed this problem threadbare. They have written that the first form in which the works of the apostate will be wasted is that he will lose his Muslim wife as his marriage will stand annulled. The second punishment is that he will be disinherited by his Muslim father. The third punishment is that his prayers, fasts and pilgrimage will be of no avail to him Fourthly, no Muslim will say his funeral prayer. Fifthly, he will not be buried in the graveyard of the Muslims. Sixthly, if there is an Islamic Government and someone abandons Islam in a state of religious warfare with non-Muslims, he will be killed.

As regards a person who accepts Islam after becoming an apostate, there is a difference of opinion

among the jurists whether he will receive any reward for the good works he did before he became an apostate. For example, if he had performed a pilgrimage and afterwards became an apostate, will that pilgrimage suffice for him, or will he have to perform another pilgrimage? Imām Abū Ḥanīfah says that he will receive no reward for his previous pilgrimage. He will have to perform another pilgrimage, if he has got the capacity. This shows that apostasy is worse than disbelief, because the good works done by a disbeliever remain in a state of suspense. If he accepts Islam, he receives a reward for them. If he dies as a disbeliever, he gets no reward. But the apostate loses all his good works even if he repents of his apostasy.

I said above that if a Muslim disowns Islam in the state of war, his punishment is death. This requires elucidation. According to some scholars, the punishment of death for an apostate is prescribed for all conditions whether or not there is an emergency. But some scholars think that death sentence can be given only in a state of emergency. In my opinion, the latter viewpoint is more correct and the proof is that the Qur'ān says:

"Those who believed, then relapsed into disbelief, then believed again, then disbelieved for a second time and exceeded in this, God will not forgive them, nor will He guide them."

This verse occurs in the Chapter on Women and this chapter belongs to the Medinese period. When this verse was revealed, an Islamic government was in existence. But the Holy Qur'ān is mentioning some people who became apostates after they had accepted Islam. Then they embraced Islam once more and again relapsed into apostasy, and went far on the path of disbelief. The matter to be considered here is that if the punishment for apostasy were death in all cases, how could they be given the respite to become Muslims after they had apostatised? Even if respite were given to them, how could they escape the punishment of death after they had become apostates once again? Although they went far on the path of disbelief, they were not punished with death. Only it was said that God will not forgive them in any case.

I know that our ancestors hold different opinions with regard to this verse. Qatādah says that the verse refers to the Jews who believed in Moses, then turned to the worship of the calf. Then they believed in the Torah but afterwards refused to believe in Jesus Christ until they also disbelieved in the Last Prophet. Similarly, some scholars claim that this verse refers to the People of the Book, but in the authentic commentaries of the Holy Qur'ān eminent commentators hold the view that this verse refers to a group of apostates. There is no reason why this

view should be lightly dismissed.

The Qur'ān does not contain only this verse on the subject. In its Medinese chapters, there are many verses which mention apostasy but do not prescribe the punishment of death for the apostate. As an example, we quote a few verses.

The Holy Qur'ān says:

(1) "Those who disblieved after believing, then went far on the path of disbelief, their repentance will not be accepted and these are the people who have been misled" (iii 80).

(2) "How can God show the right path to the people who disbelieved after believing and after acknowledging that the Prophet of God speaks the truth and clear signs had also been shown to them and God does not show the right path to the wrongdoers The punishment for such people is that the curse of God and the angels and of men will fall on them and they will abide therein for ever. Their torment will not be lightened nor will they be given respite but those who repented and did good works, surely Allah is Kind and Forgiving" (iii. 85-86).

(3) "O ye who believe, if some one of you turns his back on religion, Allah will produce in exchange a people who will be loved by God and who will love God" (v. 54).

In these verses the punishment for apostasy has been clearly mentioned but everybody can see that no worldly punishment has been prescribed. In this connection the argument is generally based on the Traditions of the Holy Prophet. But it is necessary

to determine their true import. For example, some people quote the following Tradition of the Holy Prophe: "Kill a Muslim who changes his religion." It is argued from this that Islam prescribes the punishment of death for apostasy in all cases. In our opinion, this is not the real meaning of the Tradition. Bukhārī and Muslim contain the following Tradition: "He who goes out of his religion is one who leaves his community."

Maulānā Thanāullah of Amritsar has given the following meaning of the first Tradition in the light of the second tradition: "This means that he who changed his religion and abandoned Islam and went out of the party of warriors should be killed." After this, he says: "Mere apostasy does not make a person liable to the punishment of death. Apostasy makes a person liable to death punishment when the apostate joins the enemy in an effort to undermine the strength of the Muslims."

This elucidation of the Maulānā makes it clear that the famous dictum "Death for apostasy" relates only to special conditions. This does not mean that if a person wants to abandon Islam, it is permitted to use force against him. Belief depends on one's mental attitude and no power can induce belief by using force.

The question may be raised why Islam prescribed death for apostasy even in a state of emer-

gency. In answer it may be stated that in raising this question people forget that at one time Islam was also a military organisation side by side with being a religion, and military needs required that it should keep its followers under strict discipline. Have you not seen military personnel being court-martialled for ordinary reasons. If you have seen and surely you have seen it, then how can you expect Islam not to react strongly if, in a state of war, its followers accept the views and tenets of the opposite camp?

36

CONCEPT OF CHARITY IN ISLAM

The words used in the Holy Qur'ān for charity are these: *Infāq* which means spending freely; *Iḥsān* which means to do good; *Zakāt* which means growth, and *Ṣadaqah* derived from *Ṣidq* which means truth. These terms show that the concept of charity is very broad in Islam. The Qur'ān does not merely stress major works of charity, like freeing the slaves, feeding the hungry, looking after the orphans and doing virtuous deeds for the good of public benefit, but equally forcefully minor acts of public welfare, for example, speaking kindly to the parents, have been called *Iḥsān* and in general speaking a kind word has been called *Ṣadaqah* or *Khairāt*.

The *Ḥadīth* has still more broadened the concept of charity. For example, if a person removes from the public street some injurious thing, it is a *Ṣadaqah* (charity). If a person helps another in mounting his animal, it is also a *Ṣadaqah*, or if he helps someone in loading an animal, this is also *Ṣadaqah*. To show

the path to somebody is also *Ṣadaqah*. Other examples of *Ṣadaqah* occur in the Traditions of the Prophet. To salute someone is also a *Ṣadaqah*. To abstain from doing evil to someone is also *Ṣadaqah*. Feeding one's wife and children is also *Ṣadaqah*. Not only this, to nourish oneself comes also under the definition of *Ṣadaqah*. The Holy Prophet said : What you eat is *Ṣadaqah*, what you give to your children to eat is *Ṣadaqah*, what you give your wife to eat is *Ṣadaqah*, what you give your servants to eat is *Ṣadaqah*. To treat animals kindly is also *Ṣadaqah*. If someone cultivates a piece of land and birds and other animals eat of it, that is also *Ṣadaqah*.

37

EXCELLENCE OF KNOWLEDGE

The Holy Qur'ān says :

"Allah taught Adam all the names. Then he presented them to the angels and said : Tell me their name, if you claim to be truthful" (ii 121).

The reference here is to the time when God first created Adam and vested him with His vicegerency. This caused surprise to the angels. They could not understand what the need was for other creatures besides them. To remove this surprise and, in order to establish the superiority of man over the angels, God held the intellectual competition a mention of which has been made in this verse.

God said : We have taught the names of all those things to Adam which are to be subjugated to him during the term of his vicegerency. He then said to the angels : If you think that you are superior to man, tell Me the names of those things. Thereupon the angels expressed their inability to do so. Thus

the superiority of man was made manifest.

This shows the place of knowledge in Islam. According to Islam, it is because of his knowledge that man, made of dust, established his superiority over angels who were created from light. This is the reason why the Holy Prophet, who was the teacher of mankind, has given so much importance to knowledge. Who can forget the great blessing He showered on humanity when the first verse to be revealed by God at the time of the revelation of the Qur'ān was *Iqrā'* (Read). Then he (the Prophet) loved knowledge so much that he always used to pray for the increase of his knowledge, although he was the embodiment of all knowledge. It was the consequence of this attitude to knowledge of the Holy Prophet that the vogue of writing books was more in evidence in the history of Muslims than that of any other people. The knowledge and science of Europe is a product of the last two centuries. The number of books in Arabic written from the time of the Holy Prophet till the eighteenth century exceed the number of books written in all other languages put together Similarly, when Spain was being ruled by the Muslims, the catalogue of books in its official library ran into forty-four volumes.

This verse, therefore, teaches us the lesson that man's superiority lies in his knowledge. This is the quality which elevates him above the angels.

Therefore, it is the duty of the Muslims to devote themselves wholeheartedly to the acquisition of knowledge.

38

A FEW BOOKS OF *ḤADĪTH* (TRADITIONS)

Ṣiḥāh Sittah or the six canonical collections of *Ḥadith* is an important term in our religious literature. These are the six collections of the statements made by the Holy Prophet which have gained common acceptance in the community of Islam. *Ṣiḥaḥ Sittah* or the six canonical books include (1) *Ṣaḥiḥ* of Bukhārī, (2) *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim, (3) *Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd, (4) *Jāmi'* of Tirmidhī, (5) *Sunan* of Nasā'ī, (6) *Sunan* of Ibn Mājah.

(1) Ṣaḥīḥ *of Bukhārī*. This has been compiled by Imām Bukhārī. His full name was Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl Bukhārī. He was born in Bukhārā in 194 H. and died in 256 H. Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* contains in all 7278 Traditions of which there are 4000 Traditions which have not been repeated. Imām Bukhārī deduced many commands from a single *Ḥadīth*. Therefore he collected the Traditions under different chapters. Generally, it is widely known that Bukhārī had learned two hundred thousand Traditions by

heart. Some strange objections have been raised on this point. Perhaps people do not know that when it is said that such and such traditionist knew by heart a hundred thousand or two hundred thousand Traditions, this number is fixed according to the authorities quoted. If a *ḥadīth* (Tradition) is narrated by four hundred authorities, the traditionist will say that four hundred traditions have been narrated, just as the *ḥadīth* (Tradition) "Works are judged by their intentions" has been narrated by seven hundred different authorities.

In compiling his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Bukhārī spent sixteen years Before writing down a *ḥadīth*, he used to offer two *Rak'ats* of supererogatory prayer. His lessons in *Ḥadīth* are very famous. Biographers tell us that ninety thousand persons heard *ḥādīth* from him and fifteen thousand persons attended his lessons in *Ḥadīth* at one sitting Some distinguishing features of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Bukhāri are as follows :

(*i*) He was very strict in laying down conditions for the acceptance of *aḥādīth*.

(*ii*) *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth*. In the opinion of scholars, a study of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Bukhārī gives the reader an insight into the understanding of juristic problems.

(*iii*) Arrangement according to titles and chapters. For example, *aḥādīth* have been collected separately under the headings "Book of Faith," "Book of Prayer," etc.

(*iv*) Imām Bukhārī has also put together the statements of the Companions of the Holy Prophet and also the juristic decisions of the followers of the Companions.

(*v*) Under each heading and in accordance with its contents, the Imām has also quoted the Qur'ānic verses, so that the reader may know that the Traditions which follow have been quoted in support or explanation of the Qur'ānic verses.

(*vi*) Traditionists have written many commentaries on the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Bukhārī. According to a careful estimate, so far forty-two commentaries of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Bukhārī have appeared.

(2) Ṣāḥīḥ *of Muslim.* This is a compilation of *Ḥadīth* by Imām Muslim of Nīshāpūr. He was a disciple of Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal. He was also a class-fellow of Imām Bukhārī and also his disciple. His disciples include such eminent men as Imām Tirmidhī and Imām Ibn Khuzaimah. He was born at Nīshāpur in 201 H. and died in 261 H.

The *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim contains twelve thousand Traditions of such unimpeachable authority that Shāh Walīyullah of Delhi has expressed the opinion in *Ḥujjat Allah al-Bālighah* that the majority of the scholars are agreed on the correctness of the authentic *aḥādīth* of Muslim and Bukhārī and if a person does not believe in their authenticity, he has strayed from the right path. Some of the dis-

tinguishing features of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim are as follows :

(*i*) In the beginning of the book a comprehensive introduction has been added on the principles of narrating *Ḥadīth*.

(*ii*) In regard to beauty of arrangement, the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim occupies a distinguished place.

(*iii*) The *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim occupies a high place in regard to the plentifulness of *Shawāhid* and *Mutābi'āt*. *Shawāhid* means that a narrator brings with him someone who supports him. *Mutāhi'āt* means that the Traditions are of the same meaning, but the chains of their authorities differ.

(*iv*) The translations and commentaries of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim number thirty. Among these the most famous is the commentary of Nawawī. Maulānā Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Uthmānī has also written a commentary on the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim under the title *Fatḥ al Mulhim*. Recently, an English translation of the *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* has been published in four volumes by Sh. Muhammad Ashraf.

(3) Sunan *of Abū Dāwūd*. Abū Dāwūd was born in Sijistān (Persia) in 202 H. He died in 275 H. He learned from the same teacher as Bukhārī's. His collection includes five thousand Traditions. Regarding beliefs, he has made a separate collection called *Jāmi' Abū Dāwūd*. The *Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd deals with problems of practical importance.

Therefore this book is regarded as very useful for a jurist who wants to deduce juristic conclusions from the Traditions of the Holy Prophet.

(4) Jāmi' *of Tirmidhī* This is a compilation by Imām Tirmidhī. His original name was Muḥammad b 'Ī-ā Tirmidh is a place in Khurāsān He was born there in 209 H and died in 279 H. Imām Bukhārī, Imām Muslim and Imām Abū Dāwūd are his teachers About Imām Tirmidhī the scholars generally hold that his conditions for the acceptance of *aḥādīth* were not very strict. One of his famous books is *Shamā'il Tirmidhī* which gives a complete profile of the Holy Prophet He has also written a books called *Kitāb al-'Ilal* in which he has dwelt on the defects of the narrators of *Ḥadīth*.

The commentaries on the *Jāmi'* of Tirmidhī number thirty-one of which two are in Turkish Some distinguishing features of this collection are as follows:

(*i*) This book tells us the names of those Companions who have narrated a particular *ḥadīth*.

(*ii*) The juristic standpoints of the Companions, of their successors and of those leaders of jurisprudence who have exercised independent judgment have been explained.

(*iii*) Criticism of the narrators of *Ḥadīth*.

(5) Sunan *of Nasā'ī*. This collection of Traditions has been compiled by Imām Nasā'ī. His original name

is Aḥmad b. Shu'aib. He was born in Nasā', a part of Khurāsān. Therefore, he was called Nasā'ī. His date of birth is 215 H. He was slain by the Khwārij in 304 H. Among his teachers the names of Imām Bukhārī and Imām Abū Dāwūd are worth particular mention. He was intensely devoted to 'Alī, the Fourth Caliph. He complied a book in praise of 'Alī. His first collection was known as *Sunan Kubrā*. Afterwards he abridged it. This same abridged collection is now called *Sunan Ṣughrā* or *Sunan Nasā'ī*. Most of its contents relate to '*Ibādat* (worship)

(6) Sunan *of Ibn Mājah*. The compiler of *Sunan Ibn Mājah* was Muḥammad b. Yazīd b. Mājah He was born in Qazwīn in 209 H. and died in 273 H. He was a disciple of Ibn Shaibah. He has also written a commentary on the Holy Qur'ān but acceptance was gained only by his collection of *Ḥadīth*.

Some scholars hold that *Muwaṭṭā'* of Imām Mālik or *Sunan Dārimī* is one of the six canonical books of *Ḥadīth* and not *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, because they think that in his collection he has included some extremely weak Traditions and they have criticised it for this reason. Maulānā 'Ubaid Allah Sindhī has written marginal notes on *Sunan Ibn Mājah* to explain its contents.

Not all the collections of *Ḥadīth* included in the six canonical books are of the same standard.

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Not all the collections of *Ḥadīth* included in the six canonical books are of the same standard.

According to many scholars, Bukhārī and Muslim hold the first place, then come Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī and Nasā'ī and the third place belongs to Ibn Mājah.

39

SOME SCIENCES OF *ḤADĪTH*

Most of the stock of *Ḥadīth* can be classified as follows:

(1) *Tawātur Ṭabaqah 'An al-Ṭabaqah.* Those *aḥādīth* which have been narrated continuously and without any variations by the Companions of the Holy Prophet and from them by their successors and from the successors of the Companions by their own successors. The Holy Qur'ān itself has reached us by the same continuity of narration.

(2) *Tawātur 'Amal* (*continuity of practice*). For example, the timings of prayer, *Adhān* (Call to Prayer) and the *Rak'ahs* of the prayers.

(3) *Tawātur Isnād* (*continuity of authorities*). A *ḥadīth* may be narrated by many authorities For example, the *ḥadīth* "Actions are judged by their intentions" has been narrated by seven hundred aurhorities, or the *aḥādīth* which relate to the finality of Prophethood. These have been narrated by one hundred and fifty Companions of the Holy Prophet.

(4) *Tawātur Qadr Mushtarak* (*continuity of underlying values*): for example, miracles. Every narration of a miracle is a single report but all such Traditions embody a common value, namely, that it is proved that the Prophet has performed works contravening the laws of Nature.

Among the discontinuous *aḥādīth* also, each *ḥadīth* has been narrated by eight or ten narrators. Then the astounding labour put forth by the traditionists to develop the science of *Ḥadīth* has astonished even non-Muslim scholars. For the preservation of the *Ḥadīth*, the traditionists have evolved fifty-two sciences. If one undertakes a cursory examination of these sciencess, one cannot but pay tribute to the labour and honesty of these scholars of *Ḥadīth*. Below we mention some important sciences :

(1) *'Ilm Muṣṭaliḥ al-Ḥadīth*. Necessary information regarding the science of *Ḥadīth*.

(2) *'Ilm al-Jiraḥ wa Ta'dīl*. Ways of impeaching the trustworthiness of narrators. Among the famous books relating to this science are *Taujih al-Naẓar* and *Qawā'id al-Ḥadīth*.

(3) *'Ilm Asmā' al-Rijāl*. Information regarding the narrators of *Ḥadīth* have been collected in twelve or twenty volumes. The famous books on this subject are Imām Dhahābī's *Mīzān al-I'tidāl* and Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar's *Lisān al Mīzān*.

(4) *Gharīb al-Ḥadīth*. Explanation of the abstruse

terms and unfamiliar words used in *Ḥadīth* literature. Maulānā Ṭāhir Fitnī's book *Majma' al-Dhikr* is a famous book on this subject, which Maulānā Waḥīd al-Zamān has translated into Urdu under the title *Anwār al-Sunnah*.

(5) *Takhrīj al-Aḥādīth*. Sometimes it happens that authors of famous books do not give references of the *aḥadīth* quoted by them. In this science the traditionists have collected such *aḥadīth* together with their references. For example, many books have been written giving references and containing criticism of such books as *Hidāyah*, *Baiḍāwī*, *Kashshāf* and *Ihyā' al-'Ulūm*.

(6) *Aḥādīth al-Manḍū'ah* (*forged Traditions*). Forged traditions have been separated from authentic Traditions Imām Suyūṭī has collected such traditions in two volumes. Similarly, books written by Mullā 'Alī Qārī and 'Allāmah Ṭāhir Fitnī on this subject are very famous.

(7) *'Ilm al-Nāsikh wa'l-Mansūkh*. This science shows what *ḥadīth* has abrogated another *ḥadīth*.

(8) *Al-Taufīq Bain al-Aḥādīth* (*reconciliation between Traditions*) In this subject an attempt is made to reconcile Traditions which apparently conflict with each other. *Ta'wīl Mukhtalif al-Aḥādīth* by Ibn Qutaibah and *Ikhtilāf al-Ḥadīth* by Imām Shāfi'ī are famous books on this subject.

(9) *Ansāb al-Rawāt*, in which the genealogy of

the narrators of *Ḥadīth* is recorded. *Ansāb al-Rijāl al-Aḥādīth* is a famous book on the subject.

(10) *Asmā' al-Ṣaḥābah* (names of the Companions). Imām Bukhārī's *al-Ta'rīkh al-Kabīr* and *al-Istī'āb* by Ibn 'Abd al-Barr Mālikī are famous books on this subject.

(11) *'Ilm al-Mukhtalif wa'l-Mu'talif*. The names of many narrators closely resemble each other causing confusion. For example, Ḥusain and Ḥuṣain. These names have been collected and short biographical notes have been given regarding each name. (One of Ibn Ḥajar's books is famous on this subject.)

(12) *Mushkilāt al-Ḥadīth*. The *aḥādīth* which are difficult to understand and seem to conflict with the Qur'ān have been explained (for example, Imām Ṭaḥāwī's *Mushkil al-Āthār*).

(13) *Fiqh al-Ḥadīth*. The way to deduce juristic conclusions from *Ḥadīth*: for example, *A'lām al-Muwaqqi'īn* by Ibn al-Qayyim and *Ḥujjat Allāh al-Bālighah* by Shāh Walīy Ullāh of Delhi.

(14) *'Ilm Aṭrāf al-Ḥadīth*. If you know only a portion of a *ḥadīth* and you want to know its full reference, authority and content, the traditionists have prepared indexes for this in which you can easily search for the full *ḥadīth*. Ḥāfiẓ 'Alī ibn 'Asākir in the sixth century H. has written a book entitled *al-Ashrāf 'Alā Ma'rifat al-Aṭrāf*. One of Suyūṭī's

books is also famous on this subject. A book has also been compiled by the Orientalists which is entitled *Miftaḥ al-Sunnah* and has been published in Egypt.

(15) *Iḥtijāj bi'l-Sunnah*, in which the place of *Sunnah* in Islam has been discussed On this subject Imām Suyūṭī has written *Miftāḥ al Jannah*. Imām Shāfi'ī has written *al-Risālah* and the seventh volume of *Kitāb al-'Umm*, Imām Shāṭibī has written *al-Muwāfiqāt*, Vol. II, and Imām Ibn Qayyīm has written *Ṣawā'iq-al Mursalah*, Vol. II. In the Urdu language, *Muqaddamah Tarjumān al-Sunnah* by Maulānā Badr 'Ālam Meerathi and *Ḥujjīyyat Ḥadīth* by Maulānā Idrīs Kāndhalvī are worth studying.

These are some of the specimens of the labour put forth by the traditionists. It can be said without fear of contradiction that no nation has done so much to preserve the life and memory of its Prophet or leader as the Companions of the Prophet and his successors have done for the preservation of what the Holy Prophet of Islam has said and done. The Prophet has passed away, but anyone who desires can enjoy his spiritual presence by studying *Ḥadīth* literature and become the recipient of blessings here and in the Hereafter.

40

DIFFERENCES AMONG THE *'ULAMĀ'* (RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS)

In every Friday sermon you hear the *ḥadīth* (Tradition) of the Holy Prophet repeated that the *'Ulamā'* (religious scholars) are the successors of the Prophets, because the Prophets do not leave any wealth in the shape of money. Their inheritance takes the shape of knowledge and its rightful claimants are the *'Ulamā'*.

This *ḥadīth* fixes the position of *'Ulamā'* in our religion. In this position they bear two responsibilities. First, that they shall guide the community in new problems as they arise. Secondly, because after the Holy Prophet of Islam no other prophet is to come, therefore the propagation of Islam in the world is their special responsibility. History bears testimony to the fact that so long as *'Ulamā'* discharged this responsibility, our community (*Ummah*) was the dominant community of the world. Our culture and civilisation led the world and we

were never overtaken by inferiority complex. But when our men of knowledge became a prey to degeneration, we fell from our heights. The condition in which you find yourself is due to the fact (among other reasons) that the *'Ulamā'* have forgotten this duty or, if they are engaged in performing it, they stand isolated from one another. They lack organisation and a sense of corporate personality. They cannot meet the challenges of the time as a compact body, because they are disunited and disorganised. I am an ordinary servant of the *'Ulamā'*. I acknowledge the great services they have rendered to the community of Islam. The *'Ulamā'*, I mean the true, *'Ulamā'*, ranged themselves against foreign imperialism. They ate dry bread and sat on the mattresses, but in the storm and winds of opposition they kept the torch of faith burning. But in spite of my sincere devotion to them, I shall be guilty of concealing the truth if I say that one of the reasons why the youth of today are straying from religion and faith is that our *'Ulamā'* lack unity and organisation. The majority of the *'Ulamā'* are in a state of conflict with one another and the newly educated youth do not hold a very high opinion of them.

As far as I have looked into the natter, the reason why the *'Ulamā'* are disunited is very ordinary. Although the *'Ulamā'* in the past were not free

from this, there was comparative good-will among them. It is true that because they are contemporaries, most of the '*Ulamā*' are grudging in acknowledging one another's scholarship and excellence. In Arbic there is a saying, "Contemporaneity creates ill-will." You must have often seen that if two scholars are contemporaries, they do not acknowledge each other's scholarship. Most often they do not even respect each other, and this leads to personal differences which grow until they become an impediment in reviving the glory of Islam.

There is no doubt that the '*Ulamā*' in the early age of Islam had differences with one another. Yet they acknowledged one another's scholarship and religious eminence. This was the reason why they mentioned with thankfulness anything good they learned even from non-scholars, not to speak of scholars. The Brelvis, Deobandis, Ahl-i-Ḥadīth and Shī'āh are famous schools of thought among the Muslims. I am not speaking about their '*Ulamā*'. Our '*Ulamā*' respected even the scholars of those sects which have passed into oblivion and which are mentioned only in books.

Biographers tell us that once Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal was leaning against a pillow, when somebody mentioned the name of Ibrāhīm b. Ṭihmān who was a scholar of the Murji'ah sect. Imām Aḥmad at once left his pillow and sat erect. He

said: When the name of some virtuous person is mentioned, one should adopt a posture of respectfulness. (See how these two scholars were divided not by ordinary but by deep differences about certain religious tenets, yet they respected each other so much that when someone mentioned the name of the other, the first sat erect adopting a respectful posture) Similarly, Imām Ibn Sīrīn and Khwājah Ḥasan Baṣrī were contemporaries and eminent religious leaders of their time. They held opinions different from each other. At one time there was also some altercation between them and they were angered against each other. Yet even in this state they held each other in great respect. Once a person told Imām Ibn Sīrīn that he had dreamt a dream which was that an animal entered the mosque and carried away the most pretty pebble of the mosque. He wanted to know the interpretation of the dream. Ibn Sīrīn told him that his dream referred to the approaching death of Ḥasan Baṣrī. He had been referred to as the most pretty pebble of the mosque. This shows that not merely contemporary but also mutual estrangement could not prevent them from respecting each other.

The fact is that differences are not evil in themselves. There are many things in this world which differ from one another. Differences are found in those things and creatures which have been created

by God. If differences were an evil, there would be no differences in the creatures of God. Men are born and bred in the same way. No one can count the number of persons born since the creation of Adam up to the present. But God has created so many differences in the exterior of human beings that they can be recognised from one another at first sight. In their outward shape there is some difference or other. They differ in their stature, in their outward features and in their colour. If there is a resemblance in their shape and features, even then somewhere there is some difference which tells us that this person is Zaid and the other person is Bakr.

Imām Shāfi'ī holds that the existence of differences is a testimony to the existence of God. He says: How many men are born and yet they differ in their shape, voice and temperament. Can such a variety come into existence of itself? Is there no Being to create this variety? How wonderful it is that the parts and limbs of the human beings differ from each other, and there is so much difference in them that with their help we can recognise men! Modern science has shown that criminals can be identified by the mark on their left thumb, because the lines on the left thumb of one man are always different from the lines of the left thumb of another man. These differences are not limited to humanity. Other creatures er aalso marked by like differences.

For example, the same variety of flowers differ from each other. Their petals apparently look like each other. But science says that if scientific instruments are used to examine them, it will be revealed that each petal differs from the other, however slightly.

If God did not like differences, no differences would have existed. This shows that differences are not evil in themselves. What is really evil is to proceed from difference to opposition and hostility, otherwise man's reasoning power differs in the case of different men. So is human understanding different in the case of different men. The intellectual level of some men is low, that of others is high. Understanding and thinking are not uniform in all cases. Again, in all spheres of life, we note the existence of differences. There are differences at home. There are differences in government offices. In short, there are differences everywhere. Differences become vicious only when they take the form of opposition and hostility. Disruption and quarrels arise when the thinking of others is held to be wrong and blasphemous, while one's own thinking is held to be true and in accordance with Islam. This is the source of all evils, otherwise difference of opinion is not bad in itself.

In the past also, there were differences among the '*Ulamā*'. They differed from one another in their thinking and opinions. This is not something new.

This difference of opinion was just like the difference of opinion between a District Court and a Sessions Court or that between a Sessions Court and a High Court. A criminal is sentenced in some case with a punishment. But the Sessions Court or the High Court remits the punishment. Under the same law in a certain case the decisions of the Sessions Court and the High Court differ from each other. Similar differences exist among engineers They give a different opinion from one another in preparing a design for some building Not only judges and engineers, even ordinary artisans have their own differences. Take for example tailors. They differ from one another in cutting the clothes. This shows that differences exist not only among the '*Ulamā*' but also among artisans, skilled workers and judges. But the difference is that in the past the differences among the '*Ulamā*' did not lead to mutual opposition and conflict. The '*Ulamā*' did not cause the people to quarrel with one another. They did not form groups and coteries. They did not quarrel with one another due to their differences. They acknowledged one another's learning and respected one another.

I shall appeal to the '*Ulamā*' of Pakistan to forge unity among themselves. If thiefs can get united for theft, brigands can get united to waylay men, if drunkards can get united for drinking, why can the

'*Ulamā*' not become united for the service of the community? How regrettable it is that even vagabonds and rascals have become united, but the '*Ulamā*' remain disunited and disorganised! The masses should approach them and request them to forget their differences and to enter the field in order to meet the challenges of modernity to Islam If they do not ignore their differences, they will be held responsible for the resulting conditions.

On the other side, the '*Ulamā*' should set up Islamic missions and acquaint the people of Europe with Islamic teachings because Europe is suffering from a thousand diseases and it needs some prescription to rid it of its evils. The '*Ulamā*' should not be overawed by the big missions established by the Christian priests Europe has driven them out and it is weary of their outworn beliefs and religion. This is the reason why the Christian missionaries finding the spiritual and intellectual climate of Europe unfavourable for themselves are in search of other lands to start their activities. The prescription which Europe needs for its diseases is Islam and only Islam. It is another thing that we who hold the prescription in our possession should take Europe to be our physician.

As I have stated earlier, Europe needs Islam very badly. Christianity cannot solve the new problems arising in their society For example, if a person

marries a woman according to the Christian law and then there arise differences between the husband and the wife, the husband cannot divorce her unless he accuses his wife publicly of sexual immorality in a court of law and proves the charge to the satisfaction of the court. This unnatural obstacle to divorce has created disruption in family life and people are anxious to have a new set of laws for marriage and divorce. Therefore, in America many clubs have been formed with a programme to have marriages for fixed periods. For example, at the time of marriage, a six-month term is fixed. If the husband-wife relations remain good in this period, so much the better, otherwise the marriage is terminated after six months. I can easily make the assertion that if Islamic laws of marriage are presented to the people of Europe, they will respond to the call of Islam.

It is Islam which, on the one side, says that divorce is the most hateful thing in the sight of God among things made lawful and, on the other side, permits the husband and the wife to sever their relations if they cannot live amicably, and for this purpose it is not necessary to wash one's dirty linen in public. It is possible that the '*Ulamā*' may complain of lack of resources and point to the plentiful resources at the command of the Christian missionaries. But I will say that we need not be overawed

by the wealth and unlimited resources of the Christian missionaries. This wealth and these resources have not been given to them by Europe. They have obtained them here. The first Christian missionary who came to India in 1793 was William Carey. He came to India in very untoward circumstances. He was the son of a poor cobbler. He spent most of his life in mending shoes. When he planned to come to India to preach Christianity and sought help from the Christians, they all refused. Disappointed, he made an appeal for contribution. In response to his appeal, the Christians collected for him a total amount of thirteen pounds and two and a half shillings, when he required a sum of one hundred and thirty pounds to travel to India together with his wife and children. But he did not lose courage and at last succeeded in his object. The '*Ulamā*' need not harbour any anxiety. If they start working in this direction, success will come to them. Time is calling them to wake up from their sleep If they do not wake up, they will be held accountable more than others on the Day of Judgment. The Holy Qur'ān says :

"(Say, O Prophet :) This Qur'ān has been revealed by Me so that through it I may warn you and those to whom its message reaches."

But the question is: If the Qur'ān's message does not reach some people, how can they be warned?

And who is responsible for carrying the message of the Qur'ān to the people? Certainly, it is the *'Ulamā'*. If the *'Ulamā'* do not discharge this duty, they will be held accountable on the Day of Judgment not only for their personal deeds but also for the nations of the world. Now the *'Ulamā'* are in the best position to tell what excuse they will bring before God.

41

UNRIGHTEOUS *'ULAMĀ'* (RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS) OF THE COURT OF AKBAR

Akbar was a very good man in the beginning. He was deeply attached to religion and was very strict in observing prayers and fasts. He had appointed five *'Ulamā'* (religious scholars) in his court to lead the prayers. Among these five *'Ulamā'*, the name of Mullā 'Abd al-Qādir Badāyūnī is worth mentioning as he has recorded in detail the important events of Akbar's life in his book. Mullā 'Abd al-Qādir says that every Friday night Akbar called a meeting of the *'Ulamā'* in which selected *'Ulamā'* took part and they discussed important intellectual problems. The real trouble arose due to those unrighteous *'Ulamā'* who made such wrong impressions on the mind of Akbar for their selfish ends and material advantages that he began not only to hate the *'Ulamā'* but also lost his attachment to Islam. These *'Ulamā'*—about one hundred in number—came from different parts of the country and joined his circle.

They were trying to compete with one another in having the position as close to Akbar as possible. They loved to come nearer to the King and, in their eagerness to gain his good-will, they did not think it improper to quarrel and dispute with one another. Once matters reached so far, they began to excommunicate one another. When Akbar saw this, he became estranged not only with the '*Ulamā*' but also with the religion of Islam itself. He began to say that the religion itself which the '*Ulamā*' represented must lie at the root of all this discord.

In every age there are two kinds of '*Ulamā*'. One group is that of the unrighteous '*Ulamā*' and the other is that of the righteous '*Ulamā*'. The righteous '*Ulamā*' always speak the truth. They go on doing their work without looking to the currents of the time. They stand bravely and stare the political authority in the face. They criticise freely anything evil or opposed to the laws of Islam. They spurn worldly wealth and are free from avarice. They do not seek high positions. They are born to reform their nation and are prepared to sacrifice their lives in order to elevate the word of God in this world. They take pride in living a life which gives them freedom to say what is right and do what is right. It is because of such '*Ulamā*' that religion prospers and the *Sunnah* (practice) of the Holy Prophet comes to life again and again. On the contrary, unrighteous

'*Ulamā*' are those who, in their selfishness and for the sake of personal advantages, are ready to sell their religion. In their eyes the most excellent thing is proximity to the ruler for the sake of which they employ every tactic, lawful or unlawful. These '*Ulamā*' pervert religion and cast it in any mould which fits in with their interests.

There was no dearth of such false '*Ulamā*' in the time of Akbar. An example will give you an idea of their real stature. A religious scholar had hit upon a novel device to save himself from the payment of *Zakāt*. When after the passage of one year his property became liable to *Zakāt*, he transferred it to his wife and when another year passed and the wife's property became liable to *Zakāt*, he transferred the property to himself. Thus the religious scholar whom Akbar had given the title of *Ṣadr-i-Jahān* contravened one of the basic principles of Islam. In his house he had built a graveyard about which it was popularly said that all the dead in his family were buried here. But when *Ṣadr-i-Jahān* died and these graves were dug, it was found that not dead bodies but bricks of gold were buried there. Thus in his house there were heaps of gold.

The famous scholar of the court of Akbar, Mullā Mubārak and his two sons, Faiḍī and Abu'l-Faḍl, also played a big part in creating confusion and diffidence in the mind of Akbar. They used to

explain the Qur'ān to suit their own ideas and please Akbar so that they may be reckoned among his closes associates. Faiḍī argued as follows:

"God has said: A just king will sit under the shadow of the throne of God on the Judgment Day. Similarly, the Qur'ān says: Obey God, obey the Prophet and those in authority among you. This means that the king occupies a higher rank than the religious scholars. Akbar is the embodiment of justice Therefore, it is not necessary for him to follow the opinions of the *'Ulamā'* because they occupy a lower rank. With God Akbar enjoys superiority over others. Therefore, if differences arise among the *'Ulamā'*, Akbar has the right to settle them and this right has been vested in him by God."

As has been stated above, there are unrighteous *'Ulamā'* in every age. In our own time there is no dearth of *'Ulamā'* who flourish on the stipends of the capitalists and feudal lords and try to pass the sentence of excommunication on the poor people. If the wage-earner demands his rights, these *'Ulamā'* support the industrialists in the name of Islam. Seen in the correct perspective these so-called *'Ulamā'* have been responsible for the decline of Islam in every period.

42

ADVICE OF IMĀM ABŪ ḤANĪFAH

It is a general misconception about the *'Ulamā'* that they are experts in religion only, and as far as the problems of life are concerned, they have no concern with them.This impression is totally wrong. The *Maulvīs* who are paid by the capitalists become, of course, blind because their illegal gratifications set the seal on their hearts and minds. But it is not so with the righteous *'Ulamā'*. They remain at war in the battleground of life. Service of the poor constitutes their worship and criticism of the oppressors constitutes their religion. Their eyes, deriving illumination from the light of the Holy Prophet's teachings, pierce through the darkness prevailing in society. This has been pointed out by the Holy Prophet in his saying: "Fear the insight of the believer."

The Egyptian author, Abū Zahrah, has recorded in his book, *Hayat-i-Abū Ḥanīfah*, a will of the great Imām. This will contains pieces of advice to his disciple, Yūsuf b. Khālid, when he was sending the

latter to Baṣrah. If you read these, you can form an idea of how much insight these advices embody. We can say with certainty that Abū Ḥanīfah's advices to his disciple will remain relevant to the needs of practical life till the end of time.

The Imām (Abū Ḥanīfah) said to his disciple:

"Remember, if you ill-treat people, even though they are your parents, they will become your enemies. He is not a wise man who is not courteous to the people. Treat everyone according to one's station in life. Respect scholars and the gentry. Be soft to young men. Mix freely with the masses. Adopt the company of good people. Do not hold anyone in contempt. Do not be niggardly in kindness Do not reveal your secret to others and do not rely on anyone unless you test him fully. Do not develop close friendship with a miser. Do not adopt any habit which is not outwardly good Do not ever abandon courtesy, patience and large-heartedness. Always put on white clothes. Always use perfume. Share your meals with people. A miserly person cannot become the leader of the people. Your close friends should be those who are duly acquainted with the affairs of the people, so that wherever you see discord or disorder, you may set it right. Whether people visit you or not you should meet people. Whether a man is good to you or does something bad to you, you should do good to everybody. Habituate yourself to forgiveness. You should not concern yourself with things which do not concern you. Leave anything which has become a nuisance. Hasten to discharge your duties to others. Visit the sick and also visit a person who

does not visit you. As far as possible, be tolerant to the people. Continue to meet and salute them. If you pass by mean people, salute them. You should present some learned book or other to those people who come to you, so that they may study it. Do not break your promise with anybody, even though he may break his promise with you. Even if they betray you, you should fulfil your trust. Do not give up faithfulness Exercise piety and be friendly to men of religion.

43

MU'TAṢIM BILLĀH'S SENSE OF HONOUR

Look into your history. Your history does not furnish only just one example of Muḥammad b. Qāsim. It preserves many such records when you crossed the rivers of blood and fire on hearing the call of your sisters. The event relating to Muḥammad b. Qāsim belongs to the period of the Umayyads. Listen to a similar event of the time of the Abbasids, and these times of the Umayyads and Abbasids are not the best periods of your history. You call it the period of monarchy. But even in this period your sense of honour was very conspicuous. An idea of this can be formed by an incident described below.

Mu'taṣim Billāh had conquered Ammoria in Asia Minor. But after some time, the Christians reoccupied it. Intoxicated with their victory, the Christians began to oppress the Muslims. A public attempt was made by a Christian to dishonour a Muslim lady. She cried out: "O Mu'taṣim! help me." Intelligence of this incident reached Mu'taṣim. As soon he heard

of this, he stood up on his throne and turning towards Ammoria, he said: "Labbaik," which means "I respond to you." Although the astrologers pronounced that the moment was inauspicious for an expedition and tried to prevent Mu'taṣim from taking action, Mu'taṣim ordered his army to get prepared. He invaded Ammoria after travelling difficult distances. The Christians were defeated. After long search, Mu'taṣim found the aggrieved lady. When she came to the court, he wept with joy and said: "Sister, after a long period I will take my meal joyfully. The court poet composed some verses in which referring to the astrologers' pronouncement he said:

"The sword gives more correct news than books. The edge of the sword is the border-land between absurdity and struggle, and knowledge does not shine out in seven stars but in the flashes of lances."

I do not say that you should declare *Jihād* (holy war) here and now. The national and international obstacles in this direction are fully within my view. But I do say: Prepare for holy war from today. The enemy does not understand the language of arguments. He understands the language of the sword. Fill your youth with enthusiasm for *Jihād*. Create in your minds the desire to die in the way of God. You should be a *Mujāhid* (warrior) not only in talk but in action too. If you do not do anything

and merely pass resolutions or indulge in verbal slogans of *Jihād*, you will not be able to please the soul of your Prophet, by merely celebrating the Day of Badr.

44

EXCELLENCE OF THE NIGHT OF BARĀT

Before we talk of the excellence of the Night of *Barāt*, it should be kept in mind that a certain place or time is respected and held excellent because of what it contains. For example, the land on which a mosque has been constructed and the land on which shops have been constructed are outwardly similar. Not only that; from the point of view of elegence and adornment, the land on which shops have been constructed may appear to be superior. If the earth in the mosque is covered by mattresses, the earth in the shops is covered by carpets. If the walls of the mosque are plain, the walls of the shops are decorated by calendars. But you will testify yourselves that you hold the land on which the mosque has been constructed in greater respect than any other land. Why? Merely because you have reserved the land on which the mosque has been constructed for the worship of God. Therein you hold your prayers, and this has raised the status of

the mosque. Similarly, you take the cities. There are many cities in the world which are marked by spacious roads, lofty buildings and colourful gardens, but the respect in which Medina and Mecca are held by the Muslims is not enjoyed by any other city. This is not due to the fact that these two cities are marked by any outward features not found in other cities. The real reason is that in one of these cities, there is the House of God (Ka'bah) and in the other city lies the tomb of the Holy Prophet. These pecularities have made them the bride of cities.

Take, for example, Friday. In all appearances Friday is not different from the other days of the week. Not only this, it is quite possible that due to changes in weather, Friday may be actually shorter than other days But on Friday we have a congregation of prayers peculiar to itself. This has made Friday a blessed day. Similarly, all nights have been created by God. Some of them are dark, some are bright, some are long and some short. But no night enjoys excellence over others on any of these counts. But some nights are set apart for some worship of God or for some Divine work. These worships or Divine works give them special prominence and they become the Night of *Barāt* or the Night of Badr.

The word is really *Barā'at*, not *Barāt*. *Barāt* is a common usage, but it is wrong. Because in this night the sins of the sinners are forgiven and the

people of Hell are delivered from Hell Fire; therefore this is the night of freedom and of *Barā'at* (deliverance).

What is the excellence of the Night of *Barāt*. The Qur'ān says nothing clear about it. But some commentators have argued from the verse of the Holy Qur'ān : "We have revealed it in the blessed night." (Chapter *Dukhān* or Smoke). According to these commentators, this is the night of the fifteenth of Sha'bān and they reconcile it with belief in the revelation of the Qur'ān in the Night of *Qadr* by asserting that in the Night of Barāt the Qur'ān descended from the Preserved Tablet to the heavens and, in the Night of *Qadr*, this was revealed to the Holy Prophet.

However, the Traditions of the Holy Prophet speak frequently of the excellence and blessings of this night. According to these Traditions, this is the night of forgiveness and mercy. The mercy of God descends on the heavens in this night and cries out: "Is there anyone who is ready to purchase this article, who stretches out his hand and gets his reward, who sheds tears of repentance and receives in return the mercy of God, who presents to God his lacerated heart and gets his wounds cured ?"

It is reported by 'Alī that the Holy Prophet said :

"When the night of the fifteenth of Sha'bān comes, keep awake at night and offer prayers and

fast during the day, because God descends to the seventh heaven from the time of sunset, and says: Is there anyone who may ask for forgiveness so that We may give him provision and sustenance, is there anyone in trouble so that We may deliver him? This voice continues to come till the dawn of the early morning" (Ibn Mājah).

'Ā'ishah, mother of believers, says: "One night I was awakened and I did not find the Holy Prophet in his bed. I searched for him. He was in the graveyard of Baqī'. He said: Gabriel came to me and said: Today is the night of the fifteenth of Sha'bān. In this night God grants salvation to as many people as there are hair in the sheep of Banū Kalb.

Banū Kalb was a famous tribe of Arabia. It had more herds of sheep than any other tribe. The meaning here is that God forgives on this night innumerable sinners and wrongdoers. But whereas in the Night of *Barāt*, the mercy of God inundates the world, there are some unfortunate people about whom it has been clearly mentioned that God will not turn the eye of His mercy towards them. Among these are polytheists, people with rancour in their hearts, proud and haughty persons, drunkards, those who oppress people in collecting taxes, magicians, people who are disobedient to their parents and people who are not good to their relations.

Thus people who defraud the creatures of God and do not observe their duties towards them,

people who, instead of instilling faith and belief in the hearts of men, make them sceptical, who try to increase their wealth by means of bribery and breach of trust, who drown their reason and understanding in their cups of wine, are driven out from the presence of God even on this night of forgiveness, and for them the Night of *Barāt* brings not union (with God) but separation.

Unfortunately, now-a-days the Muslims confine themselves on this sacred night to the observance of some lifeless customs. They prepare sweet dishes and indulge in the display of fireworks. They think that by doing these things they have observed the Night of *Barāt* I do not say that you should not prepare sweet dishes. If God gives you enough, you can prepare sweet dishes every day. But you should not think that you have celebrated the Night of *Barāt* merely by eating sweet dishes. Most people give plenty of money to their children on this night for fireworks. But they do not take into consideration the fact that by thus spending money they are committing a sin which brings them no pleasure. The Holy Qur'ān says that when the devils approach the heavens for finding out secrets, the angels forcibly drive them out. Angels throw fire on the devils so that they may not reach the heights of heaven, and we throw fire towards the heavens as if we want to prevent the angels, who are the messengers of Divine

mercy, to reach the inhabitants of the earth.

This display of fireworks is wrong not only from the religious viewpoint. It also brings loss of life and property. Every year many precious lives are lost in this useless display. From the financial point of view, a poor nation wastes hundreds of thousands of rupees in this entertainment. There is no doubt that district authorities put a ban on fireworks in the areas under their jurisdiction. But in practice this ban becomes meaningless. The people defy their orders in the face of the guardians of law. What is more strange is that, on the one side, a ban is put on fireworks and, on the other side, fireworks are sold publicly. This is like giving an order that you can knead the flour but you cannot bake it.

45

FUNERAL PRAYER TEACHES US MUCH

Funeral prayer teaches us three broad lessons.

(1) It reminds us of death. All our evils spring from the fact that we have forgotten death. We are so busy in the affairs of the world that we have no idea of the Hereafter. The Prophet had told us that the love of this world is at the root of all evils. This saying of the Holy Prophet is coming true in our present-day society. Worldliness has become part and parcel of our life and as a consequence our life has become a bundle of sins. There is only one way out of this sad plight, and it is that we should sometimes remind ourselves of our approaching end. Funeral prayer fulfils this spiritual need in the most effective way.

(2) Funeral prayer carries the message of monotheism. There is a praise of God in the funeral prayer as well as supplication to God. Funeral prayer contains all that is found in the obligatory prayers but the difference is that in the funeral

prayer a dead body is placed before us. Therefore, bowing and prostration are not allowed lest an observer should think that Muslims are prostrating before a dead body. Muslims are so sensitive in the matter of monotheism that they have included this distinctive feature in the funeral prayer so that belief in monotheism may not be tainted with the act of bowing before a person other than God.

(3) Funeral prayer fully brings out the collective aspect of Islam Just consider the prayer read on this occasion. The dead body is that of a single Muslim but when you pray for him you are at the same time praying for all Muslims dead and alive, present and absent, young and old, men and women. Prayer for forgiveness is meant for a single person (the dead man) but everywhere you use the plural form instead of the singular form Today when everyone is for himself, selfishness has become a common feature of our life and a brother is thirsting for the blood of the brother, funeral prayer reminds us that Muslims are links of the same chain and they are as the bricks of the same wall. The funeral prayer teaches us that we should not be selfish. If we pray, we should not pray for ourselves alone. We should remember all Muslims on this occasion.

If we learn these three lessons from the funeral prayer we can emerge from our present low posi-

tion and rise to new heights. But we are becoming so much devoid of faith and work that not only we do not offer the funeral prayer of others but we also do not live our lives in such a way that others may feel happy in offering funeral prayer for us after our death. We are merely dreaming of becoming rich overnight, even though a poor man who lives in straitened circumstances but leaves behind him a host of sorrowful faces is better than a rich man over whose death very few people shed tears

'Abdullah was a Companion of the Holy Prophet. He had become an orphan while still a child. He was brought up by his uncle who gave him herds of cattle and other wealth. He was passing his life in comfort when he became convinced of the truth of Islam. For some time he did not reveal this secret to anyone out of fear But when Mecca was conquered by the Holy Prophet and he went back to Medina, Abdullah told his uncle that he had accepted Islam. The uncle became enraged and took away everything from him, even his clothes. He became naked but he took a blanket from his mother which he cut into two. He wore one part of the blanket as undergarment and the other he put on on his shoulders. In this state he went to Medina and sat down on the vestibule of the mosque of the Holy Prophet. When the Prophet came to the mosque for the morning prayer, he asked him who he was. He replied: One

eager to see you. The Prophet asked him what his name was. He said: 'Abd al-'Uzzā The Prophet said: No, your name is 'Abdullah and your title is: One who has two sheets. You will live near me in the mosque.

On the occasion of the expedition to Tabūk, 'Abdullah requested the Prophet to permit him to join the warriors. The Holy Prophet said : Bring me the bark of a tree. When the bark was brought, the Prophet tied it on the arm of 'Abdullah and prayed : O God, I wish that the disbelievers should not shed the blood of 'Abdullah. 'Abdullah said : I want to die the death of a martyr. The Prophet said: When a man goes out in the path of God and in the way he dies of fever, even then he is a martyr. And the same thing happened. In the way 'Abdullah had an attack of fever and he died. A Companion says: I remember the scene of his burial. It was night. Bilāl was holding a lamp in his hand. Abū Bakr and 'Umar got down in the grave of 'Abdullah. The Holy Prophet himself entered the grave and said to the Companions: Respect your brother. The Holy Prophet also uttered the prayer : O God, I have been pleased with 'Abdullah till his last breath. You also be pleased with him.

'Abdullah b. Ma'sūd was a rich man compared to 'Abdullah. But when he saw the good fortune of 'Abdullah, he said : I wish I had been buried in his

place.

Success does not lie in one's becoming a minister or a president. These offices cannot go all the way with you. After all you have to die one day. Real success is that, however one may pass one's life in this world, but when death comes, the people may all pray that one's sins be forgiven.

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46

SACRED HAIR AND OTHER SACRED RELICS

I have been asked the religious and rational position of the sacred hair pilgrimage to which is performed in Kashmir, or of the sacred hair of the Holy Prophet discovered in some places.

As far as the practice of ascribing anything to the Holy Prophet without proper enquiry and research is concerned, this is a great sin and it is the duty of every Muslim to set himself courageously against this practice and save the people from falling a prey to deceit. But if it is proved by authoritative traditions that such a claim is well founded, every respect is due to it as this is the necessary consequence of the love in which we hold the Holy Prophet. The Companions of the Prophet and their successors as well as the successors of the successors acted similarly and they held such things dearer than their life.

Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ has stated that once while Khālid b. Walīd was fighting the disbelievers, his cap fell.

Thereupon he attacked the enemy so fiercely that their lines were pierced. After the end of the battle, when Khālid's fierce attack was talked about, he said: I was not anxious to save my cap. The reason was that in this cap there were some sacred hair of the Holy Prophet and I did not like that those hair should fall into the hands of the disbelievers.

According to a Tradition reported in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim, Asmā', daughter of Abū Bakr, states: I had in my possession a gown which my sister, 'Ā'ishah, had given me. This was the gown of the Holy Prophet.

According to a Tradition of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Bukhārī, 'Uthmān reports that the mother of believers, Umm Salamah, had with her a few hair of the Holy Prophet which she had preserved in a silver tube. If someone fell a victim to an evil eye or suffered from some other disease, one went to her. She put the hair in water and the sick person was asked to drink the water, after which he or she recovered from the disease.

'Uthmān says: I have myself seen those hair. They were red in colour. On this subject, the traditionists have discussed whether or not the Holy Prophet dyed his hair. They have arrived at the conclusion that he never dyed his hair. The red colour of the hair was due to the ripeness of the hair. The real fact is that the Prophet did not need to dye

his hair. He had such excellent health that even in his last years only twenty hair of his head near his ears were grey. Since we are talking of grey hair, I should say incidentally that, according to both ancient and modern schools of medicine, hair become grey mostly because of anxiety. Anxiety brings premature old age. Even in our own society, the reason why the health of the people is ruined and old age comes in youth is that people suffer from all kinds of anxiety. The Prophet himself was laden with cares both of this world and the next. He was full of anxiety not only for the believers but also for the non-believers. The Qur'ān says: You are so much troubled over their disbelief that you are in danger of killing yourself. The Prophet suffered from so many cares that neither his predecessors nor his successors suffered from a tenth part of them. In spite of all this, his health was so excellent that, as stated above, at the age of sixty-three he had only twenty grey hair.

This was a digression. What I was saying was that the Companions of the Prophet showed extraordinary respect for everything which was ascribed to the Prophet. A female Companion of the Holy Prophet narrates: Once the Prophet came to my house. A leather bag full of water was hanging over the door. The Prophet drank water from the leather bag. When he went away, I cut that part of the

leather bag which was touched by his mouth and preserved it.

All this was due not merely to the love of the Companions for the Holy Prophet which expressed itself in various forms without his permission The Prophet of God knew about this very well and authentic Traditions show that, in order to meet the wishes of the Companions, he sometimes himself took the initiative. A Tradition reports that on the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage, after the Prophet had performed the sacrifice, a barber came to the Prophet. He turned his right ear towards him and when he had shaved the hair near the right ear, the Prophet called Ṭalḥah and gave the hair to him. Then the hair near the left ear were shaved. He gave these also to Ṭalḥah and asked him to distribute them among the people.

It is clear that, in accordance with the directions of the Holy Prophet, his hair must have been distributed among the Companions and wherever the Companions went, the sacred hair must also have gone with them. I have already stated in connection with Khālid b. Walīd that the sacred hair of the Holy Prophet were dearer to the Companions than their own life. Therefore, their preservation and their being handed over from one generation to the next is not strange.

This is the background of the relationship of the

Muslims with the sacred hair of the Prophet. From this you can easily form an idea of how greatly the Muslims rever such relics. It is true these relics should not give occasion for the practice of innovations not sanctioned by religion. If we do this, we will not win the pleasure of the Prophet but cause him to be displeased with us. But no sect or school of the Muslims holds different opinion about those relics of the Holy Prophet the authenticity of which has been established by tradition and history.

47

ACCEPTANCE OF ISLAM BY 'ALLĀMAH MUḤAMMAD ASAD (LEOPOLD WEISS)

'Allāmah Muḥammad Asad, the famous scholar and author, is a recognised personality in the scholarly world of Islam. Before he accepted Islam, his name was Leopold Weiss. He has himself put in writing the story of his acceptance of Islam, which is entitled *Road to Mecca*. This book has been translated into Arabic under the title *al-Ṭarīq ilā Makkah*. To form an idea of the truth of Islam and its appeal to men of sound nature, it is profitable to read this book. In the following paragraphs we give a gist of this book.

Leopold passed his boyhood in Lor, a city of Poland. His father was a Jewish scholar. In accordance with family traditions, he acquired knowledge of Hebrew religious sciences from private teachers. He was made to study religious scriptures. The text and commentaries of Talmud were both familiar to him. But even during the days when he was a student,

he was troubled by the thought that the way in which God has been presented to man in the Old Testament and Talmud shows that He is more than ordinarily interested in outward religious ceremonies. This deity is extraordinarily preoccupied with the well-being and future of one particular nation, i.e. the Hebrews.

Leopold was distressed to see that the Old Testament had a tendency to present the conception of God not as the lord of the entire mankind but as the lord of a particular people. After completing his education, Leopold entered the field of journalism and, without informing anyone, he came to Berlin in 1920 where he got an employment in the United New Agency.

In the spring of 1922, his maternal uncle invited him to visit Jerusalem. He was a responsible officer there in a hospital which treated mental diseases. When he received this invitation, Leopold determined to visit Jerusalem. After resigning from the New Agency, he started immediately on a journey to the Middle East. At this time, he, in common with other Western young men, believed that Islam and its teachings are no more than an artificially illumined chapter in the history of mankind. He did not know much about the role played by Islam in imparting a new vision to man's mind. He did not think that Islam could stand comparison with Chris-

tianity or Judaism. His train was passing through the desert of Sinai when a small incident took place which created deep impression on his mind. This was his first glimpse of the Arab society. A bedouin was travelling in his compartment. When the train stopped at a small station, he purchased a piece of bread. When he was taking his seat his eye fell on Leopold. Without saying anything he cut the bread into two halves and, presenting one half to him, he requested him to eat it. A fellow-traveller who was wearing a Turkish cap but had otherwise put on a European dress and who seemed to be a middle-class merchant offered himself as interpreter and said in crude English: "He says: You are also a traveller and I am also one, and our way is the same." In all appearance, this was a small matter but Leopold had the glimpse of a society which was free from all artificiality.

During his stay in the Middle East, Leopold came nearer to the Arabs and he undertook a regular study of the Holy Qur'ān. He was struck in the very beginning by the fact that the Qur'ān is not interested merely in spiritual matters but it also deals with some spheres of life which apparently look trivial and come within the definition of things worldly.

But gradually the truth dawned on Leopold and he felt that for the first time he had come in a society in which human relations are not governed

by economic interests or by the community of race and colour.

In 1924 Leopold again set out for the Middle East as a press representative. In the train yet another strange incident took place. In his compartment there were only two travellers besides him. One was a Greek merchant of Alexandria and another an Egyptian peasant who was illiterate but had a lot of common sense. The conversation turned on the social justice embodied in Islamic law. The Greek traveller did not agree with Leopold's impressions about Islam. He said: "The law of Islam does not embody as much justice as you think." Then they began talking in Arabic instead of French so that the Egyptian co-traveller may also understand them. The Greek traveller turned to the Egyptian and said: "You say that your religion is full of justice. Can you explain why Islam does not allow Muslim females to marry Christian and Jewish males, while it allows Muslim males to marry Christian and Jewish females? Is this justice?" The Egyptian replied without hesitation: "This is nothing but justice. I will tell you why the law of Islam had laid down this rule. We Muslims do not believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God. We believe that he is a Prophet, like Abraham and other Prophets, and all these Prophets brought the same message which was finally delivered by Prophet

Muḥammad (peace be upon him). Now, if a Christian or a Jewish girl marries in a Muslim family, she can very well be satisfied that in her new family her sacred personalities will be mentioned with respect. On the contrary, if a Muslim girl marries in a non-Muslim family, she will always be faced with the danger that her Prophet may be mentioned with disrespect in her new family. Do you think it is justice to leave this poor woman in a condition where she will have to face continuously such troubles and insults?" Hearing these words from the lips of an illiterate Egyptian, Leopold felt that he had found a new door to Islam.

Then Leopold had to travel to Kabul from Herat. Here during his journey, the head of a village made him his guest, and he stayed with him for some time. One evening, one of the villagers sang some songs on a three-stringed guitar. These songs mentioned the fight between David and Goliath. When the songs had been sung, the head of the village commented: "David was weak but his faith was strong." When he heard this, he added the words: "You are numerous but your faith is weak." His host looked at him with surprise and Leopold, continuing his conversation, said: "Can you not act courageously and go back to the bright and progressive religion which was yours? How strange it is that Ataturk who was not a very religious man has become the

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hero of your Muslim Renaissance!" "Are you a Muslim?" his host enquired. "No," replied Leopold, "but I find in Islam a great combination of elegance and subtility and when I see you undervaluing it, I feel displeased."

At last came the blessed moment when Leopold was to embrace Islam. In September 1926 once he had to travel with his wife in Berlin in an underground train. In front of him was sitting a rich and prosperous merchant. He was wearing a diamond ring in one of his fingers, which revealed the immensity of his wealth and yet be seemed useasy and restless. Not only did he appear restless but he was extremely sad. He was looking at the empty space and his lips were tightly pressed against each other because of some internal distress.

Then Leopold looked at the other persons sitting in the compartment and he cast a searching glance over all those people who, without any exception, looked quite prosperous They were putting on fine dresses. But he found them looking pale due to some sadness, a sadness which was so hidden that they themselves were not aware of it.

When he came back home, accidentally his eyes fell on the Holy Qur'ān. He wanted to remove it to some other spot when he saw an open page of the Qur'ān which had printed on it the chapter beginning with "Abundance diverts you." In this chapter

the Qur'ān has, in its peculiar style, commented on the abundance of wealth and human greed For a moment Leopold seemed to be lost in himself. This was a true comment on the incident of the previous night. This was such a definite reply to his questionings that all his doubts were at once dispelled. Now he believed that the book in his hand was God's own revelation Although this book was given thirteen hundred years ago to a man, it clearly predicted a situation which was peculiar to our machine age and which never presented itself more clearly than in this period of our history.

He was convinced that the Holy Qur'ān is not the embodiment of human wisdom because a man may be as wise as possible, but he could not predict a predicament in which the world found itself in the twentieth century. He was hearing from the Qur'ān the lofty and deep voice of the Last Prophet (peace be upon him).

He embraced Islam and, from Leopold, God made him Muḥammad Asad of scholarly reputation.

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BIRTHDAY OF THE HOLY PROPHET AND OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Every year the birthday of the Holy Prophet brings in its train thousands of blessings and mercies not only for the Muslims but for the whole world. The love and sincerity with which Muslims of Pakistan greet this great day is immense, but is still short of what is really due on such an occasion, because this day is the birthday of the guide of the whole world, Prophet Muḥammad (peace be on him).

There is no doubt that in showing love and devotion on this blessed day, we sometimes commit acts which are repugnant to the spirit of Islamic *Shari'ah* (law) and contrary to its sacred character. In the self-forgetfulness of our love we cross the limits within which we should stay if we are to attain true success and well-being. It is also true that in expressing our devotion we ignore the difference which marks the Islamic acts of devotion from the worshipfulness of other nations and it is sometimes felt that

we have violated those restrictions which mark us off from other people. In spite of these shortcomings the emotion which gives birth to this self-forgetfulness and extreme devotion is extremely charming and exciting. This emotion is the love which we bear for the Guide of the universe, the Path-finder of the worlds and the unique Leader of men and jinn. This is not an expression of love for one individual but of love for the well-being of the entire humanity. When we love the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be on him), we really show our attachment to this God-created universe. In the overflow of this world-embracing love it is not unnatural for us to commit some mistakes. If an attempt is made to prevent the commission of these mistakes, it will be a good thing. But the fact remains that, in spite of these mistakes, we are not prepared to condemn this beautiful emotion.

We think that, instead of condemning these mistakes born of love, our religious leaders should take advantage of this psychological situation. Very few people are unaware of the fact that the pattern of conduct laid down by the Holy Prophet is the anchor which has preserved the ship of our community in the storms of the last fourteen hundred years. On the occasion of the birthday of our Prophet, the nation is prepared psychologically to accept all the teachings and practical consequences of the prophetic

pattern of conduct. On this occasion every individual is eager to know from the '*Ulamā*' something about the ideal life of the Holy Prophet. If, instead of taking advantage of this psychological state and adopting positive steps to fulfil the healthy urges of the people, we keep on involving ourselves in sectarian controversies of the past or if we give some message to the people about the life of the Holy Prophet which is far removed from the practical problems of our own lives, this will be tantamount to losing a good opportunity by involving ourselves in negative methods of approach. It is the duty of the revolutionary workers to preach the message of equality in this atmosphere and, in order to unite the people against injustice and exploitation, to convey to the common people the ideal conduct of the Holy Prophet.

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A PROPHET HAS BEEN SENT TO EVERY NATION

It is our belief that till the advent of the Last Prophet, Muḥammad (peace be on him), God had sent Prophets to every nation. The Qur'ān says: "For every nation there is a guide." This is the reason why our '*Ulamā*' have treated as Prophets those great personalities whom the non-Muslims respect and whom they call reformers, for example, Gautama Buddha, whose followers number millions in the world of today. According to an eminent religious scholar, Buddha was the same Prophet whom the Qur'ān refers as Dhu'l-Kifl His argument is that Buddha belonged to Kapilvastu. *Kapil* in Arabic has been changed into *Kifl* and the Prophet of Kapilvastu has been called Dhu'l-Kifl. As far as the doctrines and teachings of Buddha are concerned, it may be supposed that the followers of Buddha perverted them just as the Christians and Jews perverted the doctrines and teachings of their

Prophets.

Not only this, some '*Ulama*' think that it is quite within the bounds of probability that the gods worshipped by the Hindus are really those Prophets who were sent to the world at a time when the world was populated by the jinns and man had not yet made his appearance. Qāḍī Thanāullah of Panipat who has written a commentary on the Qur'ān says that the fearful features, lofty stature and the multi-headedness of those gods show that those people who are being worshipped today were not men but jinns. They must have been sent for the reform of the jinns. The Indians made idols of them and began to worship them. It is a separate issue whether Prophets were sent to the jinns. These views may be correct or faulty. What we wish to point out is that our '*Ulamā*' are very broadminded in so far as the question of the advent of the Prophets is concerned. It is a recognised part of our faith that Prophets were sent in every period of history and to every nation. But those Prophets had a mission which was confined to a particular territory, to a particular time and to a particular nation ; the laws which they brought with them were not of universal validity. Their message was not for all time and for all men. Because it is the special characteristic of the Last Prophet that he was sent by God for the whole world and the system of life introduced by him contained the solution of

every difficulty. With the advent of the Holy Prophet of Islam, prophethood came to an end, because, after him, the world does not stand in need of a new prophet and a new system of laws.

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ROOT OF DISCORD

It is a general complaint now-a-days that in the mutual relations of the people, love, sincerity and faithfulness are becoming non-existent. Wherever you see, there are quarrels, unpleasant relations and mutual antipathies. Brother is dissatisfied with brother and parents are disgusted with their children. Hearts, instead of being joined to each other, are being severed. Jealousy, rancour, enmity and such other diseases are on the increase. Conditions have become so serious that everyone feels his honour is unsafe.

Many factors underlie this situation into the details of which this is not the occasion to enter. But there is one factor which has been ignored by people who treat it as something ordinary, whereas the fact is that it is at the root of all discord, and I want to make a few observations on it. What is regrettable is that even virtuous people and those who are engaged in the service of the faith have also fallen a victim to this evil. If we nip it in the bud, I assure

you that all hatred and jealousy will disappear and the atmosphere will become mostly clear.

The Prophet has said: "One believer is the mirror of his brother believer." This seems to be a brief saying, but it depicts every aspect of Muslim society. What are the characteristics of a mirror? Its first characteristic is that when you stand before it, it reflects every aspect of your features. It does not conceal your elegance and beauty, nor does it conceal the marks and spots on your face.

Its second characteristic is that, in reflecting your beauty or ugliness, it is not guilty of exaggeration. It shows you the spots on your face in their true proportions, neither more nor less. Similarly, it presents before you your beauty and adornment as they are without taking away anything from or adding anything to it.

Its third characteristic is that, while it speaks before you, in your absence it remains silent. It does not mention your defects in your absence.

These are the three characteristics of a mirror. The Prophet's saying that "The believer is a mirror of his brother" means that this is the quality of the relationship of one believer with another. He acknowledges all the virtues of his brother and is a sympathetic critic of his defects in his presence. He encourages him by acknowledging his merits and pointing out his mistakes before him. In giving an account of

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his merits and defects, he indulges in no exaggera tion. He neither over-stresses his defects nor does he flatter him by over-praising his merits and virtues. Along with this, he does not find fault with his brother in his absence, nor does he bring him into contempt by dwelling on his defects.

It is regrettable that our society is becoming gradually devoid of these qualities. These principles of human relationship are becoming extinct. Now-a-days our meetings and assemblies evoke no interest unless someone is criticised and condemned in his absence. Whether it is the villagers in their rural gatherings, or the residents of the cities, whether they are people who sit in the cafes or those worshippers of modern culture who dance in films, all are equally involved in this vice. Today everywhere you will find markets of human flesh. In the privacy of home life, in street crowds, in rural meetings and in clubs, everywhere human blood is sucked and human flesh is eaten. Some people say that in some territories of Africa man-eating tribes exist. I say: Today every society has become an eater of human flesh.

Backbiting has become the second nature of the modern man and, unless it purges itself of this evil habit, human relations cannot be based on mutual sincerity. This is the fatal vice which we ignore and treat as being ordinary.

51

BRIBERY MEANS SELLING ONE'S CONSCIENCE

Earning of lawful wealth has great importance in Islam. It treats lawful wealth as the grace of God. The Qur'ān says: "When you have offered the Friday prayer, disperse in the land to earn your living. According to Islam, if someone tries to earn his living in order to save himself from the necessity of asking for alms, he is really earning the pleasure of God. According to the traditionist Baihaqī, the Holy Prophet said:

"If a person earns his living by lawful means with a view to avoiding the disgrace involved in asking for alms, to provide for the needs of his children and to mete out sympathetic treatment to his neighbour and do him good, he will meet God in such a state that his face will be as bright as the moon."

For this purpose, Islam approves of learning every trade and adopting every profession. The

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Holy Prophet said: "Allah loves His creature who adopts a profession or learns a trade so that he may not stand in need of help from any other person."

But when one earns one's living by unlawful means, usurps the rights of others and resorts to bribery for making oneself financially well off, then all this wealth is turned into the fire of Hell. The Islamic *Sharī'ah* (law) was quite aware fourteen hundred years ago that for usurping the rights of one another, people will resort to bribery. This disease existed even in the society of pre-Islamic Arabia. But because there was no regular system of government at that time, opportunities for corruption were limited. But when Islam brought the scattered individuals under a collective system of a high order, it obviated this great danger by giving specific directions and declared repeatedly in clear terms that bribery is a curse which brings ruin both in this world and in the Hereafter. The Holy Qur'ān warned the believers in clear terms:

"And do not eat up your property among yourselves for vanities, nor use it as a bait for the judges with intent that you may eat up wrongly and knowingly a little of (other) people's property" (ii. 188).

The Holy Prophet has also condemned bribery in such harsh language as to inspire fear in our hearts. According to *Kanz al-'Ammāl*, he said: "Everybody fed on extremely unlawful wealth is destined

to burn in the fire." When he was asked what was extremely unlawful wealth, he said: "Bribery."

In another Tradition, wealth earned from fornication and bribery has been mentioned as coming under the definition of extremely unlawful wealth. The Prophet said: "There are two doors to extremely unlawful income. These are bribery and sacrificing one's chastity."

In other words, a prostitute who sells her body plays the same role as is played by a man occupying a post of official responsibility when he takes bribe. The only difference is that while it is her body that the prostitute sells for a few coins, the government official sells his conscience for a few coins.

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A LOAN OF THREE FARTHINGS IS EQUAL TO SEVEN HUNDRED PRAYERS

You must have read about an incident involving the Holy Prophet and his blind companion, Ibn Umm Maktūm. In connection with this incident, it should be kept in mind that even if Ibn Umm Maktūm had come to know that the Prophet was angry with him, he would not have felt it even slightly, because the Companions loved the Prophet so much that on a hint from him they were ready to sacrifice their lives. The fact is that if one loves somebody, one is pleased even at his anger.

Abū Dharr Ghifārī was a close Companion of the Holy Prophet. It was his habit that when he related a *ḥadīth*, he would mention the clause uttered by the Prophet, namely, "Even though the nose of Abū Dharr be covered with dust." This clause in Arabic is uttered when a person wishes to express his displeasure. But Abū Dharr Ghifārī would not hesitate to relate this clause, because he enjoyed it.

Similarly, if the Holy Prophet had expressed his anger openly against Ibn Umm Maktūm, he would not have taken it ill. But, in spite of all this, God drew the attention of His Prophet to the fact that he should not have acted in that way.

This was not a sin. This was not an error. The Prophets are immune from sin and error. This was not even an injury to the feelings of the blind Companion, because Ibn Umm Maktūm did not notice that the Prophet had turned away his face from him, nor did he notice the Prophet's sour temper which was dictated purely by the interests of the faith. The Prophet wanted to mollify the hearts of the chiefs of the Quraish and he desired that no opportunity should be lost to preach the faith to them. In spite of this, if the Qur'ān narrates this story, it is because it wants to teach the community of Muslims that they should avoid a situation where there is the least possibility of injuring the feelings of others. Now consider whether we are following this lesson. Is it a fact that in our society people abstain from injuring the feelings of others? If this is not so and surely it is not so, then we should remember that, while God warned His Prophet against even the probability of injuring one's feelings, we shall be dealt with severely by God because we do not hesitate to injure the feelings of others and our conduct is such that no one's honour is safe from our

attacks.

Remember that courtesy and good morals are basic to Islam. The Prophet said: "I have been sent in this world to perfect morals." An idea of how much sanctity was attached to courteous conduct by our eminent religious personalities can be formed by the following statement of Junaid of Baghdad: "A sinful but courteous person is better than one who recites the Qur'ān but is discourteous"

It may be that you start thinking how a sinful man can be better than one who recites the Qur'ān. I will solve this riddle for you also. There are two terms: the rights of God and the rights of man. Although the rights of man are also the rights of God, because if He had not given rights to man, we would not have recognised them. It is for the sake of convenience that this division has been made. There are some rights which pertain to the relationship between man and God. About such rights, God has said that, excepting the sin of associating other deities with God, all other sins may be forgiven which relate purely to man's relationship with God. But there are also rights pertaining to the relationship of man with man. About such rights, God has said clearly that the sins pertaining to such rights will not be forgiven by Him, unless the aggrieved man himself forgives them. *Zakāt* (poor-due) is the right of God and a

debt is the right of man. But God says that if you have an amount of money liable to *Zakāt* and at the time you are indebted to someone, you should first pay off your debt, and if the amount that remains with you is liable to *Zakāt*, then you should pay the *Zakāt*.

Durr al-Mukhtār is a famous book of Ḥanafī jurisprudence. It contains the following Tradition:

"If a person is indebted to the extent of three farthings, then on the Day of Judgment, his seven hundred prayers will be transferred to the register of his creditor."

It is regrettable that it has become a fashion in our society today to incur debts. The standard of life has been raised so much that no one lives within his means. A race is going on for raising the standard of living. Everybody is anxious to join the race. For this purpose one does not hesitate to trespass on the rights of others.

This shows that the rights of man are very important in the sight of God. He does not tolerate that somebody should be discourteous to His servants. Therefore, Junaid of Bughdad said: "A sinful but courteous person is better than one who recites the Qur'ān but is discourteous."

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HE DID NOT BOW HIS HEAD BEFORE EMPEROR JAHĀNGIR

The Commander-in-Chief of Janangir's forces, Mahābat Khān, and other military officers like Khan Khānān and Khān-i-Aʿẓam were disciples of the twelfth renovator, Shaikh Aḥmad Sirhindī. When they came to know that their spiritual guide had been imprisoned, they planned a revolt. Many nobles of the Emperor left him and joined them. A military revolution was in the offing, when suddenly the rebels changed their mind and again swore fealty to Jahāngīr. The Emperor was surprised how this change came about when the rebels were so nigh to success. When he made an inquiry, the Emperor discovered that the twelfth renovator (Shaikh Aḥmad Sirhindī) had sent them a message saying: "We do not want to dethrone Jahāngīr, we want his reform. Desist from your revolt and swear fealty to Jahāngīr."

Before this incident, Jahāngīr had come to know of Shaikh Aḥmad's good intentions through jail officials. He was shown those letters also which he had written to his devotees during the period when he was under arrest. Circumstances show that Jahāngīr's heart had already been softened. After this proof of his sincerity, he had no justification to keep him in prison.

He ordered that the Shaikh's camp should be pitched along with the camp of his army and he enjoyed the Shaikh's company together with his devotees in the army. When, after a year or two, the Shaikh returned to Sirhind, the Emperor visited him twice. When he tasted the food cooked in the Shaikh's public kitchen, he said: "I have eaten many delicious dishes on my table, but I have never enjoyed any other food as much as your food."

After he had become a devotee of the Shaikh, a great change came over the Emperor's life. He gave up drinking wine. He began to offer his prayers regularly and to observe fasts. His relationship with the Shaikh became so close that in many books he has been quoted as saying: "I have never done any work from which I can hope to attain salvation But I have in my possession a document which I will present to God. The document is that one day Shaikh Aḥmad (Sirhindī) had told me: 'If Allah takes us to Paradise, we will not go there without

taking you with us.' "

Although it is difficult to claim that the reforms of the twelfth renovator reached the point of completion during the reign of Jahāngīr, but it can be said that the Dīn-i-Ilāhī of Akbar died its own death after Abkar's demise. Positive results of his efforts manifested themselves in the reign of Shāh Jahān, until there appeared that religious-minded Emperor of the Mughals who destroyed every relic of Akbar's Dīn-i-Ilāhī and continued this work for fifty years. It is the verdict of history that 'Ālamgīr was the spiritual progeny of the twelfth renovator and it is due to his spiritual influence that the innovations enforced by Akbar became extinct in spite of his royal efforts and resources, but the standard of Islam is fluttering in the whole world even today.

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WHO WAS THE AGGRESSOR?

A gentleman writes: "I daily read your article, 'Islam, Our Faith,' and a prayer goes forth from my lips for you. I request you to reply sometimes to the attacks made on Islam by the followers of other religions. At this time I am repeating one such objection raised by non-Muslims. I hope you will give a reply. It is said that Islam spread because of the truth of its teachings. But when we see that so many wars took place during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet and so much bloodshed was caused, we are forced to declare that Islam did not propagate itself by the truth of its teachings but by the force of the sword. What is the truth in this objection?"

It is true that during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet, many wars took place. But those who raise this objection forget to mention who was responsible for these wars. The Holy Prophet went on preaching the message of Islam in Mecca for twenty-

three years. All instruments of persecution were employed against him. Thorns were spread in his path. He was stoned. An economic boycott was instituted against him. At last he was driven from his home town. But what was the reply of the Prophet against his persecutors? He wished to strew flowers in the way of those who were stoning him. He was preparing to pave the way for the eternal life of those who were stoning him and he was praying for the guidance of those who had gone astray.

From Mecca the Prophet comes to Medina. It is here that the wars started. But who takes the initiative? The initiative is taken by the same group of disbelievers who did not rest satisfied even after driving out the Muslims from Mecca. Lord Headley was a newly converted Muslim scholar. He has said something very beautiful in this connection. He says that it can be decided from a look at the situation of the places where the wars took place as to who was the aggressor and who was the defender. The first war was fought at Badr which is situated only thirty miles from Medina. Who led the expedition to this place? It is clear that they were the Meccans. The second battle book place at Uḥud which is at a distance of only twelve miles from Medina. Here also the invaders were the disbelievers and polytheists. The third battle is the battle of the Confederates. In this battle the disbelievers and the Jews

laid siege to Medina. Muslims had to dig trenches round Medina for the sake of defence. The situation in which these three battles were fought bears testimony to the fact that the enemies of Islam took the initiative. When this mischief reached its height, Muslims launched an attack in some places in order to exterminate the mischief-makers. If this step had not been taken, peace would not have been restored, and the Prophet's mission would not have come to a successful conclusion.

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ESSENCE OF FAITH

Fundamentally there are two kinds of agreements or covenants There is one kind of agreement which is between God and man. Another kind of agreement relates to the dealings between man and man. When the Holy Qur'ān demands from the believers that they should carry out their agreements or fulfil their covenants, it includes both types of agreements. In directs the believers to carry out the agreement which relates to be obedience of God and also to fulfil the agreement of performing the duties which one owes to others. The agreement between God and man is of two kinds. There is an agreement or covenant into which every soul entered with God in the beginning of Time. The Holy Qur'ān contains a mention of this covenant The Qur'ān says that when all the souls were gathered together in eternity, God asked them: "Am I not your Lord?" They said: "Why not? You are our Lord." The question how and in what place this agreement was made is

unnecessary.

It is not essential that there should have been a regular meeting for this purpose. The real meaning of this is that belief in one God is the demand of human nature. It is embedded in man's conscience. However far a man may go astray, there comes a moment in his life when he despairs of all earthly supports and is forced to call on the Lord of the worlds. At the time of one's death a voice springs up from the depth of one's soul that one should bow down before one's Creator.

The second type of agreement is that which every Muslim makes consciously with his Lord after he accepts the faith of Islam. He declares that he will obey God and His Prophet. If they forbid him from doing something, he will desist from it. If they command him to do something, he will carry out the command. When the Holy Qur'ān says: "Fulfil your covenants," this includes the requirement that one should obey God and His Prophet in accordance with the covenant one had made.

Besides this covenant between man and God, the covenant between human beings is of two kinds. One kind of agreement is that made by one man with another that he will do this or that or that he will carry out some special obligation. At the time of this agreement sometimes an oath is taken and sometimes agreements are made without an oath. If

an agreement is made upon an oath, it becomes all the more sacrosanct, but if an agreement is made without an oath, even then it is not something to be taken light-heartedly by a Muslim. The Holy Qur'ān says that it is one of the essential qualities of a Muslim that he fulfils his covenants under all circumstances. The Holy Qur'ān says: "They are a people who fulfil their trust and observe their covenants."

The second kind of agreement is that which exists naturally between one man and another. No spoken or written word is needed for this kind of agreement. All those duties which we owe to others as members of humanity are included in this agreement and we must carry out those duties as part of our agreement, for example, the duties we owe to our children, to our neighbours, to our parents, and to our teachers. All these are duties which we owe to others and we shall be held responsible for them even if we do not make a formal agreement with regard to them. These responsibilities lie on our shoulders of themselves and, unless we discharge them, we cannot claim that we are fulfilling our agreements.

After this brief discourse, it is not difficult to arrive at the conclusion that the fulfilment of agreements is the soul of morality and the essence of faith. If we are devoid of this quality, it means that we are

miles away from Islam. This is not an assertion made by us. The Holy Prophet said the same thing in the following words: "He who does not fulfil his agreements is devoid of faith."

THE END



Maulana Kausar Niazi was born on 21 April 1934. At 42, he is among the youngest members of the Cabinet where, for the last five years, he has been Minister first for Information and Broadcasting, Auqaf and Haj, and now for Religious Affairs, Auqaf and Haj, Minorities and Pakistanis Overseas. He speaks several languages, including Arabic, Persian, Urdu and English. His knowledge of Islamic theology is as unique as his acquaintance with the best in world literature, not necessarily religious. The practical thinker that emerges from his books uplifts the Maulana to the plane of one truly learned in the ways of Islam.

Maulana Niazi is essentially a man of the people, having risen from among them and serving them through the People's Government wisely stewarded by his leader and that of the people, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Elected on Mr Bhutto's call in 1970 with an overwhelming majority, Maulana Niazi, then serving a term as a political prisoner, was later chosen to be a Cabinet Minister when Mr Bhutto became President. The Maulana's life is a story of vicissitudes, of fortitude in the face of misfortunes and of humanity towards his fellow beings. That most of it was spent in the company of the Common Man is not fortuitous. The Maulana would have liked it to be no different.

This book, *Islam Our Guide*, is a companion volume to the Maulana's books *Islam Our Religion*, *Towards Understanding the Quran*, and *Fundamental Truths*, and comprises of those of his thoughts and impressions which could not be included in them.

The learned author calls himself a student of Islam; he takes no pride in his knowledge, in the vastness of his studies or in the depth of his learning. But his books establish the fact that he has tried to understand Islam and has imbibed a faith in it after full understanding. The deeper he has gone into his study of Islam, the more is he confirmed that it is not foreign to the nature and temperament of man.